TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Pushpalata Kaphle* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in English Language Education* presented on *17 January 2025* entitled *Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Portfolio-based Assessment-A Narrative Inquiry.*

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Portfolio-based assessment, an approach emphasizing the ongoing collection of students' work to evaluate their learning progress over time, has gained increasing attention as an alternative to traditional assessment methods in Nepal and beyond. This dissertation explored the understanding and implementation of portfolio-based assessments among English language teachers in the Kathmandu district in Nepal. The study reflects on the transformative potential of portfolios in evaluating student progress beyond traditional assessment methods. In this research, I have tried my best to highlight the background of this study to establish how my journey captured my interest in alternative assessment strategies.

The study establishes a theoretical framework for portfolio-based assessment, emphasizing its role in fostering holistic evaluation and continuous feedback. This study identifies a significant gap in the existing literature concerning teachers' perspectives on this Portfolio-Based Assessment, particularly within Nepal's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Employing a narrative inquiry approach, the study collected qualitative data through interviews and reflective practices to capture the experiences and challenges of the basic level EFL teachers implementing Portfolio-Based Assessment in Nepal.

Based on the experiences shared by the participants, key findings indicate that teachers view portfolio-based assessment as a valuable tool for documenting student learning, promoting self-reflection, and increasing engagement. However, the study also identifies challenges such as resource limitations, inadequate training, and

difficulties with documentation. The dissertation concludes with practical implications for improving portfolio practices, stressing the importance of professional development and collaboration among teachers, students, and parents for the better implementation and effectiveness of Portfolio-Based Assessment. Finally, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on innovative assessment strategies, advocating for a shift toward more comprehensive evaluation methods that recognize diverse learning experiences and nurture lifelong learning skills.

…………………………..   17 January 2025

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शोध सार

अंग्रेजी भाषा शिक्षामा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि पुष्पलता काफ्लेको शोध प्रबन्धको शिर्षक "कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कनको अभ्यास : एक संकथन" ४ माघ २०८१ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

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उप. प्रा . सिद्धार्थ ढुंगाना, पीएचडी   हिरालाल कापर

    शोध निर्देशक   शोध निर्देशक

यस शोध अनुसन्धानमा कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कनले विद्यार्थीहरूको सिकाइ प्रगतिको मूल्याङ्कन गर्न उनीहरूको कामको निरन्तर सङ्कलनलाई जोड दिने दृष्टिकोण आत्मसात गरेकोछ। यस दृष्टिकोणले नेपाल भित्र र बाहिर परम्परागत मूल्याङ्कन विधिहरूको विकल्पको रूपमा धेरैको ध्यान आकर्षित गर्दै आएको छ। यस शोधपत्रले नेपालको काठमाडौं जिल्लाका अङ्ग्रेजी भाषाका शिक्षकहरूमाझ कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कनको बुझाइ र कार्यान्वयनको अनुसन्धान गरेको छ। विद्यार्थी र शिक्षकको रूपमा मेरो अनुभवलाई प्रतिबिम्बित गर्दै यस अध्ययनले परम्परागत मूल्याङ्कन विधिभन्दा बाहिर रहेर विद्यार्थिहरुको प्रगतिको मूल्याङ्कनमा कार्यसञ्चयिका विधिमा आधारित भई परिवर्तनकारी सम्भावनालाई प्रतिबिम्बित गरेको छ। मेरो यस अध्ययनले वैकल्पिक मूल्याङ्कन भावी रणनीति निर्माणमा केही योगदान दिन सकोस भन्ने हेतुले यस अनुसन्धानमा कार्यसञ्चयिका अध्ययनको पृष्ठभूमिलाई उजागर गर्ने सक्दो प्रयास गरेकी छु।

    यस अध्ययनले कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कनको लागि सैधान्तिक रूपरेखा स्थापित गर्न सहयोग गर्नुका साथ समग्र मूल्याङ्कन र निरन्तर प्रतिक्रियालाई प्रोत्साहन गर्नमा यसको उलेख्य भूमिका रहने छ। यस अध्ययनले कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कनमा शिक्षकहरूको दृष्टिकोण सम्बन्धी अन्तर्निहित साहित्य अन्तर्गत विशेष गरी नेपालको विदेशी भाषाको रूपमा रहेको अंग्रेजीको इएफएल (EFL) सन्दर्भमा एक महत्त्वपूर्ण अनुसन्धानात्मक रिक्तता पहिचान गर्ने प्रयास गरेको छ। यस अध्ययनमा कथात्मक सोधपुछ दृष्टिकोण प्रयोग गर्दै नेपालमा कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कन कार्यान्वयन गर्ने क्रममा आधारभूत स्तरका इएफएल (EFL) शिक्षकहरूको अनुभवहरुलाई गुणात्मक सूचनाका रुपमा ग्रहण गरी देखिएका चुनौतीहरूको निराकरणका लागि अन्तर्वार्ता र चिन्तनशील अभ्यासहरू मार्फत अध्ययनलाई पूर्णता दिने प्रयास गरिएकोछ।

निष्कर्षत: सहभागीहरूले साझा गरेका अनुभव समेटिएको यस शोधपत्रको प्रमुख निष्कर्षले शिक्षकहरूलाई कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कन गर्न विद्यार्थीहरुको सिकाइको प्रलेखीकरण गर्न र आत्म–प्रतिबिम्बलाई प्रविधिकरण गर्न एंवम संलग्नता बढाउनका लागि समेत प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र एक मूल्यवान उपकरणको रूपमा साबित हुने विश्वास लिईएकी छु। यद्यपी, यस अध्ययनका क्रममा स्रोतको सीमितता र अपर्याप्त प्रशिक्षणमा कठिनाई जस्ता चुनौतीहरूको सामना गर्नु परेको कुरालाई यसको सीमाको रुपमा लिईएकोछ। कार्यसञ्चयिकामा–आधारित मूल्याङ्कनको राम्रो कार्यान्वयन र प्रभावकारिताका लागि शिक्षक, विद्यार्थी र अभिभावकहरूबीच पेशागत विकास हुनु जरुरी देखिन्छ। यस संगै सम्बन्धित पक्ष बीच सहकार्यको महत्त्वलाई सुझावका रुपमा प्रस्तुत गर्दै कार्यसञ्चयिकाको अभ्यास सुधार गर्न व्यावहारिक प्रभावहरू सहित यो शोधपत्र तयार भएको हो। अन्तमा, यो अध्ययनले नवीन मूल्याङ्कन रणनीतिहरूमा चलिरहेको बहसमा योगदान पुर्‍याउनेँ विश्वास लिएकी छु। विविध सिकाई अनुभवहरूलाई पहिचान गर्ने र जीवनभर चाहिने सिकाईका सीपहरूलाई पृष्ठपोषण प्रदान गर्ने रुपमा थप व्यापक मूल्याङ्कन विधिहरूतर्फ परिवर्तनको वकालत गर्नेछु।

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पुष्पलता काफ्ले
उपाधि उम्मेदवार

This dissertation entitled "*Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Portfolio-based Assessment-A Narrative Inquiry*", presented by *Pushpalata Kaphle* on *17 January 2025*.

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I understand that my dissertation will be part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes me to reveal my dissertation to any release upon request.

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DECLARATION

      I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university. The dissertation Entitled *Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Portfolio-based Assessment-A Narrative Inquiry has* not been submitted for candidature for any degree.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is profoundly dedicated to my facilitators of Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED), my family, my school, The Celebration Co-Ed School/College, friends, my research participants, and their schools who have been part of my life to whom I am always indebted, and who directly and indirectly supported me on this journey.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligent
BEE	Basic Education Examination
BLC	Basic Level Curriculum
BLE	Basic Level Examination
CA	Continuous assessment
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
IA	Internal Assessment
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
KU	Kathmandu University
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
LSWR	Listening Speaking Reading Writing
MEd	Masters in Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPhil	Masters in Philosophy
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NEP	National Education Policy
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBA	Portfolio-based Assessment
PhD	Philosophy in Doctor
SCT	Socio-Constructivist Theory
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SESP	School Education Sector Plan
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with setting a scene to contextualize my research topic. While doing so, I recounted my academic and teaching journey to get closure to what and how my portfolio has been a benchmark in my English language learning journey. This is followed by conceptualizing the portfolio to assist me in exploring the main issue of my study and developing a solid foundation for a statement of the problem. The study and research questions aim to ensure clarity and depth of understanding of the issue or problem. Finally, I end this chapter by exploring the need and significance of the study as a rationale and setting clear boundaries as delimitations of the study.

My Portfolio Experiences from Learner to Instructor

I remember my school days as an outgoing and jovial student who actively participated in extracurricular activities. I had numerous opportunities to speak in front of large crowds during assemblies, which gave me a sense of confidence, thinking critically, communicating with my friends and teachers, and conveying a clear message in front of the masses. I would engage in poetry contests, drawing contests, storytelling, and more, showing my way of presenting, creativity, and critical thinking. Those activities played significant roles in building my confidence in English language learning. The teacher frequently asked quiz questions and assigned tasks at Tulsi Mehar Memorial English Boarding School. Students who neglected the assigned work would face specific punishments, while those who put in extra effort were recognized and rewarded. This created an enjoyable atmosphere for me to learn English. Similarly, I vividly remember studying subjects like "Gulmohar" and other English textbooks and even delivering speeches in English during school events. Likewise, my handwriting was so good that my teacher posted it on the school display board. To improve my calligraphy, I regularly practiced handwriting in an English notebook. The teacher would check and provide remarks, often praising my work with words like 'excellent.' These positive remarks always made me happy and motivated me to continue excelling in the English language at my school level. When I reflect now, I find that these components could be assessed as a continuous assessment process by creating a portfolio. A portfolio would document my progress in various

aspects of English language learning, showcasing my achievements, skills, and growth over time in a structured and meaningful way.

I also remember my undergraduate days, when my teachers asked me to submit the list of works and assignments I completed to prove my learning. I used to submit my note copies and inform the teachers at Sindhuli about my regular attendance in different colleges since I was admitted to different colleges in Sindhuli and attended classes in a college at Tahachal. Even in an informal way, I was acknowledged as a regular student. These engagements could also be a part of the assessment since they offer the proof required to confirm and record the happenings of meaningful learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Portfolio-based assessment seems authentic and reliable as it provides supporting evidence to claim the students' progress.

My understanding of portfolio assessment developed during my graduate level of study. Even though I was not clear about the practical applications of portfolio assessment, I did not know how to structure portfolios effectively or integrate them into teaching practices to benefit students. At the same time, I joined Kathmandu University. Although I didn't have the habit of attending classes regularly, I attended evening classes for my MEd studies. When I reflect now, participation is also a part of assessment. This allowed me to balance my responsibilities as a teacher during the day and a student in the evening. Regularly writing reflections became a routine, and as I received emails with various assignments, papers, and writing tasks, I realized the importance of continuous learning and keeping up with the latest developments in the field. The activities teachers have given me to complete on time make me responsible for completing my tasks online and making my folder for better systematic recording. I reflect on my work, where I was, and what I need to improve. This aligns with my Self-reflection, and this is also the part for assessment to strengthen the overcome for learning outcomes. At that time, the teachers served as my mentors, and my fellow students worked diligently, pushing me to grow and improve, which motivated me to continue my studies. Throughout my MEd journey, my portfolio served as a testament to my dedication and growth. It symbolized my ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical contexts, emphasizing my competency as an educator. Regularly reviewing my portfolio allowed me to track my progress, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate my achievements. Reflecting on that period, I am grateful

for the opportunity to have compiled such a comprehensive portfolio. It provided evidence of my learning and accomplishments and reminded me of the importance of ongoing professional development and continuous improvement.

As I progress in my career, I continue adding to my portfolio, capturing new experiences, projects, and achievements. It will serve as a lifelong record of my growth as an educator, reinforcing my commitment to excellence and providing inspiration for future endeavors. To streamline the organization of student work, I have created a centralized file system where each student's assignments and assessments are compiled. This allows for easy access and review of their previous submissions. Furthermore, it enables me to provide targeted feedback and track their progress since their last submission. The basic level curriculum has highlighted that the teacher should maintain a portfolio of a student's project work, test papers, or other proof of the student's performance (Curriculum Development Center [CDC], 2021a). I am aligning my teaching practices with established guidelines by adhering to this recommendation. This ensures that the portfolio assessment process is consistent and supports the broader educational objectives set forth by the curriculum.

Besides, while looking at other teachers using portfolio-based assessment, they had mixed opinions. They mentioned that keeping records of every child's progress document is more time-consuming and intricate. The portfolio is used not only for academic progress but also to mark their learning behavior and academic progress. A teacher could not make it effective due to high-class work and other additional responsibilities, like supervising assembly, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and organizing events like festival celebrations and parent days. Teachers generally understand portfolio-based assessment practices due to different training and sharing in their professional networks. However, they question its effectiveness due to various limitations. It gave me a thought to explore their understanding and analyze the practices of portfolio-based assessment as a research study.

In this sense, I focused more on how the teachers perceive and practice portfolio-based assessment as a major concern I came across. I wanted to explore such teachers' in-depth understanding of portfolio-based assessment practices based on their contextual references. There is a claim on portfolio-based assessment that it fosters a deeper connection between students and their learning by providing

opportunities for them to express their creativity, develop critical thinking skills, and engage in self-reflection. However, teachers cannot utilize it as provided in the curriculum or by the school authority. As an instructor, I value how portfolio-based assessment promotes lifelong learning, as it teaches students the importance of reflection, self-assessment, and continuous improvement. Research supports that portfolio-based assessment, particularly e-portfolios, enhances self-regulated learning by encouraging students to set goals, monitor progress, and reflect on their learning. These processes help students take ownership of their educational journey, fostering critical thinking and personal growth. Yastibas and Yastibas (2015) assert that using e-portfolios in English Language Teaching (ELT) has improved students' self-regulated learning by enabling them to systematically assess their performance and progress.

Conceptualizing Research Agenda on Portfolio-Based Assessment

Student portfolios are collected works that show their skills, learning progress, and achievements. Arter and Spandel (1991) define a portfolio as a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress, or achievement. In this note, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) stated that assessment allows teachers to choose criteria by which to measure how well their students comprehend and perform the course's objectives. Assessment offers the proof required to confirm and record the happenings of meaningful learning. Supporting the discourse, Dudley (2013) and Munthe et al. (2016) have supported the idea that teachers can improve learning for their pupils. However, there is a lack of research on the perspectives of portfolios as the basis for learning and assessment.

Much theoretical research supports using portfolios in EFL classrooms (Hedge, 2001). The portfolio can serve as a record of students' accomplishments or showcase their most significant work, depending on the teacher's use in conjunction with an alternate evaluation program. Some educators utilize the portfolio to record their students' learning experiences, while others utilize it to encourage reflective thinking on the part of the students (Nunes, 2004). Portfolios offer a more reflective and realistic assessment experience, allowing students to demonstrate their language proficiency in authentic situations (Burke, 2009). The current assessment practices predominantly rely on traditional testing methods, such as standardized paper and pencil-based exams and quizzes, which may not fully capture the diverse range of

students' language abilities (Khaniya, 2015). From this discourse, I can claim that alternative assessments like portfolios and other alternative ways of assessing would be one of the most needed approaches in the context of Nepal.

In language education, portfolio assessment plays a crucial role. The portfolio assessment can provide a more comprehensive and accurate reflection of students' language proficiency, enhancing educational opportunities and better employment prospects. In this regard, Belgrad (2017) stated that going beyond isolated language skills aligns with promoting holistic assessment practices. By relying on the concept, this study discusses and analyses the portfolio-based assessment practices in English language teaching as an alternative to conventional testing procedures for holistic assessment practice. The agenda of the study has emerged from personal experiences, observations, and understanding, which I highlighted in the previous section as the potential benefits of portfolio assessment. So, I intended to contribute to the existing knowledge on portfolio assessment and shed light on its potential as a practical assessment method.

The motivation behind this study is to explore the narratives of the teachers who have attempted to apply portfolio-based assessment so that other teachers and parents could relate children doing household responsibilities (working with early-grade learners, especially in the kitchen, garden, cleaning, etc.) can also be part of learning and assessment in a portfolio-based assessment system. It becomes essential in education since students' success in education is measured only through exam (paper-based test) results (Wagle et al., 2019). Their research also indicates that "parents want their children to get detached from household activities and field work" (p. 34) and study at home to bring good exam results. The study may shed light on promoting alternative assessment systems in language education by exploring the perceptions and practices of portfolios. I believe the study's result will contribute to improving teaching and assessing language. It could provide insights into educational policies and enhance the quality of English language teaching and assessment in Nepal.

Rationale of the Study

Portfolio-based assessment offers a more comprehensive and holistic approach to exploration, aligning with the principles of constructivism, which emphasizes active, contextualized learning where students construct knowledge through authentic

tasks and reflective practice. In this support, the concepts of Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1969) also highlighted that students better learn from their real-life social context and reflect on their past experiences. This means knowledge construction is possible by reflecting on and recalling previous knowledge and experiences.

By aligning with these constructivist principles, PBA promotes genuine language to engage in meaningful activities that reflect real-world scenarios and skills. In this situation, exploring teachers' practices of implementing portfolio-based assessment in their pedagogical practices would be one of the areas of concern (Shrestha, 2019). Questions like, how does portfolio-based assessment function, what are the significant issues faced by the teachers, and what is its importance in adapting it for language teaching? The above questions provide a rationale for this study.

Literature and evidence show that teachers' perceptions are critical in shaping their instructional and assessment practices, impacting students' learning outcomes. Noe (2004) emphasizes a strong correlation between perceptions and practice, indicating that teachers' views about assessment significantly affect the effectiveness of formative tools like portfolios. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by examining the relationship between teachers' perceptions and their actual implementation of PBA in language education. The above understanding will contribute to the discourse on PBA's practicality as an alternative to traditional assessment, especially in language learning, where authentic assessment is crucial.

Based on the recent literature on PBA provides a valuable foundation for understanding the existing research landscape and identifying the gaps that highlight the strain needed for this study. Using the references from the studies I viewed, I have traced a strong rationale for this research as it advocates alternative assessment. One of the seminal studies in the field of portfolio-based assessment is the work of Paulson and Paulson (1991), which examined the effectiveness of portfolios in promoting student learning and found that portfolios positively impacted student achievement, self-reflection, and motivation. This study laid the groundwork for further research on portfolio assessment and highlighted its potential as an alternative assessment method. More recent studies have expanded on the findings of Paulson and Paulson (1991) and delved into specific aspects of portfolio-based assessment. For example, Al-Hawamleh et al. (2022) explored the use of digital portfolios in language learning and

found that digital portfolios provided opportunities for self-reflection, peer feedback, and goal setting. Their study emphasized the potential of digital portfolios in enhancing learner engagement and autonomy.

Similarly, Alam and Aktar (2019) highlighted the impact of portfolio-based assessment on motivation and English language learning. From their insight, we can perceive a positive influence among students as it provides intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and language proficiency. However, while empirical studies have shown the positive effects of portfolio-based assessment, some critical debates and findings need to be considered. For example, some researchers have raised concerns about the subjectivity of portfolio assessment and the potential for bias in evaluating student work (Baldwin & Blattner, 2003). Other studies have also highlighted the challenges of implementing portfolio assessment in large-scale contexts, where issues of time management, resource arrangement, and standardized evaluation arise (Luoma, 2004).

In these references, I realized that the experiences on practices and challenges of PBA could be analyzed by exploring the teachers' experiences with portfolio-based assessment. I put my effort into highlighting that the effectiveness and implementation of PBA can also not be researched. With this mindset, I have seen the need for this research. Probing into the unique context of portfolio-based assessment in Nepal enriches the understanding of alternative assessment approaches and their implications for language teaching and learning. This study's research questions and results can serve as a foundation for further research and inquiry into portfolio-based assessment and its potential for enhancing language education practices in Nepal and other similar contexts. From the above concern, the study explored how teachers perceive and implement PBA in their classrooms, providing insights into how these perceptions influence practice. The study enhances our understanding of portfolio-based assessment as a viable language-education assessment alternative.

Statement of the Problem

The term 'portfolio' is not a new concept in education because it is an established assessment system in teaching and learning, particularly in English language teaching (Maarif et al., 2021). Even though the concept of PBA seems common, it has some issues in its implementation process. While teaching, I have experienced teachers struggling to implement the PBA in their pedagogical process. They stressed the challenges of following and maintaining PBA, which directly

influences the effectiveness of PBA in their context. The problems to be researched in this study are perceptions and practices of portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching. Despite the potential benefits of portfolio assessment, there is a need to explore the extent to which English language teachers are inclined to use this assessment approach in Nepal.

Gyawali (2020) has pointed out portfolio-based management as a fundamental practice informed by curriculum and policy to guide continuous assessment practices. He discussed a gap in the practical application of such assessments due to a lack of resources. In this context, further research could broaden understanding and practices of the assessment practices as informed by curriculum and policy (Gyawali, 2020). Similarly, he also notes that although policies emphasize the mandatory upkeep of learners' portfolios, their implementation in public schools has been largely overlooked. Portfolio-based assessment is rarely part of regular teaching-learning practices, and only a few teachers are actively creating and maintaining student portfolios. This inconsistency between policy directives and actual classroom practices reveals considerable challenges in effective application.

To address these issues, a deeper investigation into the systemic and practical barriers preventing portfolio assessment implementation is necessary. Such a study could identify the root causes of this gap and suggest strategies to align policy goals with everyday educational practices, ultimately leading to better assessment approaches in Nepali schools. I also believe teachers' understanding of portfolio-based assessment is vital, and I am keenly interested in exploring the knowledge and practice in this field of study.

Portfolio-based assessment has been globally practiced. However, in the context of Nepal, only a few studies have been conducted on portfolio-based assessment (Gyawali, 2020). Based on the literature I went through, I could not find many studies undertaken in portfolio-based assessment. The curriculum implies internal assessment through a portfolio. Based on this context, I intend to explore how language teachers perceive and practice portfolios as an internal assessment system.

Taking references from previous research, including Gyawali (2020), Shrestha (2019), Sapkota (2020), and Neupane (2021), there is a lack of evidence for portfolios. Nevertheless, I believe teachers' perception is vital and has been supported

by the literature available. Therefore, I have always had a keen interest in perception and practice in this field of study.

In my experience as a language learner and an instructor, I have observed that the use of portfolios has always been less prioritized in schools. Learning how teachers perceive and practice PBA in their teaching context is crucial. In this regard, Davis and Ponnamperuma (2005) assert that portfolio assessment can be a major tool 'to assess pupil performance and curriculum outcomes related to attitudes and professionalism' in education. I have a couple of questions about this situation, including what a portfolio is, what is included in a portfolio, who is involved in it, and what sorts of students' work they receive as a portfolio. Similarly, do students enjoy working with portfolios? How do they perceive being evaluated based on their portfolio? How do you find students motivated or not interested? How do they say they enthusiastically teach and learn through a portfolio? If not, do you see them as not interested in the activities for a portfolio? These probing questions explore teachers' perceptions of portfolios.

I explored the stories of teachers' practices and familiarity with portfolios with the help of the following queries: do you ask students to maintain portfolios? How do they record it? What sorts of teaching and learning activities do you ask them to do? Do you evaluate students based on the portfolio they submit to you? Do you use portfolios to assess students' performance and achievement? How do you do that, or how can we assess it through a portfolio? How does a portfolio help to assess a student's performance, or how does it help you evaluate students? Is it reliable to evaluate students based on portfolios? Do they motivate and encourage students to do portfolios? What are the benefits of collecting and assessing students' learning through portfolios? How do they manage the challenges of evaluating students based on portfolios?

The problem with assessment practice is the key notion for the statement of the problem of this study, i.e., testing merely the basic knowledge of learners. This is supported by Birgin and Adnan (2007), who states, "The assessment practice is mainly based on testing basic knowledge" (p. 75). This promotes mostly parrot learning, i.e., learning through memorization in our students, and does not focus on conceptual understanding of the contents (Dochy, 2001). Likewise, these paper tests that give inadequate useful information about pupils' knowledge and learning are not

enough to evaluate higher-order cognitive skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and reasoning (Romberg, 1993). Also, this test cannot measure a learner's capacity to organize the most important concepts that they possess (Shepard, 1989). Moreover, we can see that standard tests assess the easy-to-test memorization of rote skills and procedures, which is also supported by the study of Mumme (1991). The above discussion directly reveals that the traditional and holistic approaches to assessment strategies mostly prompt the concept of rote learning.

As portfolio-based assessment focuses on promoting 21st-century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, and communication in our students through practical engagement in the English language classroom, it needs to be explored from the practitioner's ways of implementing for the further betterment (Khadka & Limbu, 2020). Supporting the discourse, Chongbang (2020) also rationalized that there is a strain needed for the exploration of portfolio-based assessment in the context of Nepal because the practices of PBA require a systematic process to be reflected on the students' progress. Based on the above discussion, I realized the gap in this research; therefore, teachers' perceptions and practices of applying portfolio-based assessment must be explored for its better implementation in Nepal. Without exploring the effectiveness of portfolio-based assessment, it could not be further improved and implemented in the context of Nepal, which was a major problem for this research.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the understanding and effective implementation of portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching at basic-level schools in Kathmandu, Nepal, through teachers' narratives.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions have been raised:

1. How do English language teachers narrate their understanding of using portfolios for assessment and its complexities?
2. How do their narratives highlight the effective practices of portfolio-based assessment?

Delimitations of the Study

The study is delimited to the context of portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching at basic-level schools in Kathmandu, Nepal. The geographic delimitation focuses specifically on Kathmandu and does not encompass other regions or districts within Nepal or other countries. The study is limited to basic-level schools, including primary and lower secondary levels, and does not extend to higher education institutions or other levels of schooling. It concentrates on portfolio-based assessment in the context of English language teaching and does not encompass other subjects or disciplines within the curriculum. The primary stakeholders involved in the study are experienced teachers.

Chapter Summary

I presented my experiences and understanding of portfolio-based assessment as a learner to the instructor. The above sections and subsections helped me articulate my research agenda with clear ideas and visions. Moreover, I stated why this issue can be included in the study agenda. The problem I faced and the experiences I have collected led me to see my issue as a researchable one, which I mentioned in the problem of the study. Then, I mentioned the purpose of carrying out this research study. This research study explores the implementation and effectiveness of portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching at basic-level schools in Kathmandu, Nepal, through teachers' perceptions and their practices. Based on the study's purpose, two research questions explored the English language teachers, narrated their understanding of the use of portfolios for assessment and its complexities, and highlighted the effective practices of portfolio-based assessment. Finally, I presented the delimitations of the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter illustrates the relevant literature exploring the effectiveness of Portfolio-based assessment in Nepal and beyond. This section also presents the overall literature with themes and sub-themes. I reviewed the relevant literature by visiting national and international journals, including printed and online documents. This chapter discusses the conceptual clarity of Portfolio-based assessment, theories supported by the research study, previous studies carried out around PBA in ELT, and the policy of the Government of Nepal relating to the implementation process of PBA in Nepal.

Contextualization of Portfolio-Based Assessment

Taking references from the historical aspect of English language teaching in Nepal, we have not observed a significant change in our assessment system. Even though we have embraced the dynamics of 21st-century advancement, we still practice a dominant assessment (Paper-Pencil test) from school to the university level. In language teaching and learning, a standardized or paper test has been one of the dominant assessment methods from school to university level. Au (2011) critiques this system, arguing that high stakes testing and standardized curricula have brought back principles of scientific management, which he calls 'New Taylorism.' He also claims this approach limits teachers' freedom and turns teaching into a formulaic, efficient-driven process. Instead of focusing on student-centered learning, the system emphasizes performance metrics, particularly in English language teaching, where standardized tests continue to stifle more comprehensive and holistic learning experiences.

Opposing the discourse, Hamp-Lyons (2006) stated that formative assessment and feedback, alternative assessment or performance assessment, and uses of technology in assisting classroom-based assessment have been significant changes in English language teaching and assessment systems. Portfolios have been observed to be used for the last three decades. In this support, Elbow and Belanoff (1997) also stated that using a portfolio can be fruitful in every education program, including kindergarten to graduate programs because it allows teachers to collect diverse

information about their students and guide them accordingly. Also, Delett et al. (2010) argued that teachers have adopted portfolios as one of the alternative assessment tools worldwide.

Portfolio assessment is a comprehensive and holistic approach that involves compiling and documenting examples of students' work overtime, allowing teachers to evaluate not only the final product of the work but also the learning process, growth over time, and reflection of the students' work (Engel, 1995; Narayan, 2023). Collecting work from various stages provides a more accurate reflection of a student's progress and capabilities than traditional testing methods, which focus solely on isolated performance at a given moment (Engel, 1995). Portfolios allow students to showcase their language proficiency in authentic and meaningful contexts, including written pieces, projects, presentations, and multimedia artifacts. In a similar line, Delett et al. (2001) highlighted that portfolios are responsive resources that provide ongoing opportunities to practice and showcase actual language use in appropriate contexts and for specific objectives.

Research has shown that portfolio-based assessment can accurately reflect students' language abilities and promote deeper engagement and learning (Aghazadeh & Soleimani, 2020). It offers opportunities for self-reflection, self-assessment, and goal setting, empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey. Similarly, a portfolio discourages teachers from putting grades on student papers and thereby helps make formative evaluations (Elbow & Belanoff, 1997). Reviewing the literature on portfolio-based assessment helped me construct and understand the effectiveness of PBA and some of its challenges. Not only that, but it also helped me understand the significant discourse happening in the field. It also helped me gain insights into its potential benefits and challenges in Nepalese education.

Scholars have interpreted the notion of portfolio-based assessment differently. Engel (1995) stated that several strategies and best practices can be considered to optimize the PBA. These include providing clear guidelines and criteria for portfolio construction and evaluation, offering support and training for teachers and students, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment, and integrating portfolio assessment with classroom instruction and curriculum goals. Ongoing feedback and reflection can also enhance the effectiveness of portfolio-based assessment, promoting continuous improvement and growth.

In addition to fostering engagement, Ustunel and Deren (2010) underscore the border impact of e-portfolios on how students perceive their educational experiences. They also argue that e-portfolios bridge the gap between traditional assessments and innovative methods, allowing individuals and institutions to enrich their assessment practices. The concept of an e-portfolio reveals the importance of using and reshaping the current assessment systems by valuing diverse learning outcomes and processes. E-portfolios are gaining recognition as powerful educational tools, offering possibilities beyond traditional assessment methods. With this support, Babaee and Tikoduadua (2013) also concluded their research by claiming how e-portfolios integrate computer-based learning with social media platforms, creating an engaging and interactive educational environment that resonates with today's learners. From the above theoretical discourse, I have understood that e-portfolios can transform the learning experience by utilizing technology, making it more dynamic and aligned with modern educational practices.

Going further, Chye et al. (2013) added another layer to the above discussion by examining the motivational aspects of e-portfolios. Their research shows that enjoyment, effort, and perceived value enhance the authenticity of e-portfolios, especially in problem-based learning contexts. In their discussion, these tools encourage deeper engagement, self-reflection, and self-regulation, empowering students to take greater control of their learning journey. Supporting the claim of Chye et al. (2013), Yastibas and Yastibas (2015) further emphasize this point, demonstrating how e-portfolios support self-regulated learning by enabling students to set goals, monitor their progress, and reflect critically on their achievements.

Since e-portfolios emerged in teaching and assessing, it hold the multifaceted potential of e-portfolios through integrating technology, enhancing motivation, and fostering authentic assessments; e-portfolios position themselves as transformative tools in education. They make learning interactive and meaningful and prepare the students for lifelong learning and personal growth.

The discussion critically analyzes to develop a comprehensive understanding of the themes and concepts related to portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching at basic-level schools in Kathmandu, Nepal. By discussing, debating, and critiquing the literature, this review contributes to the theoretical, empirical, and

academic knowledge in the field, setting the foundation for the subsequent chapters of the study.

Roles of Portfolio-Based Assessment

It is believed that every learner is unique. They have their distinctive learning styles, capabilities, hobbies, and desires. I understand that it is necessary to value the differences of the learners rather than take them as glitches. In this regard, our paper-based assessment needs to be entirely shifted to 'classroom-based assessment,' i.e., portfolio-based assessment, which values the differences among learners (Hamp-Lyons, 2006). Likewise, Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) state that only carefully designed portfolio assessments can offer this quality, i.e., appreciating the differences among learners.

Portfolio-based assessment has positively impacted student engagement and motivation in language learning (Lam, 2014). When students actively select, organize, and reflect on their work, portfolios provide a sense of autonomy and relevance. This sense of ownership motivates students to produce their best work and take pride in their accomplishments, leading to increased intrinsic motivation and a more profound commitment to learning. Understanding the role of portfolio-based assessment in enhancing student engagement and motivation can shed light on effective teaching practices in Nepal.

Challenge of Portfolio-based Assessment

Despite its positive role, portfolio-based assessment (PBA) hinders its effective implementation. These challenges include time-consuming, inadequate training for educators, insufficient resources, and limited parental support for tasks such as reflecting, collecting, and selecting students' personal information (Engel, 1995). These challenges have a wide range of teaching and learning spaces, including national and international challenges of making and implementing.

Portfolio-Based Assessment (PBA) offers a comprehensive method of evaluating student learning, emphasizing growth and skills over time. Globally, its implementation is hindered by inadequate teacher training and the time and effort required to effectively create and assess portfolios (Morales et al., 2016). The lack of technological resources, particularly in developing countries, further limits the adoption of digital portfolios. Additionally, ensuring consistency and reliability across diverse educational contexts remains a significant challenge (Stephenson & Dillon,

2013). In the same discourse, Doner and Gilman (1998) claim that teachers often struggle to align PBA with curriculum standards and design appropriate rubrics, adding to the complexity of its implementation.

In Nepal, systemic and infrastructural limitations amplify the challenges surrounding PBA. Although national policies emphasize formative assessment tools, including PBA, their practical implementation remains limited due to inadequate teacher preparedness and resources (Gyawali, 2020). Many schools in Nepal lack trained educators and the infrastructure necessary to support PBA, discouraging its adoption (Dhungel, 2021). Resistance from stakeholders familiar with traditional summative evaluations further complicates the transition to portfolio-based methods. Bridging the gap between policy and practice requires comprehensive teacher training, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts among educational stakeholders to promote the practical application of PBA in Nepali classrooms (Gyawali, 2020). From these perspectives, creating and implementing a portfolio has many challenges, especially in Nepal.

Policy Review

In reviewing policies guiding portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching in Nepal, we focus on national and local education policies. Understanding the context and framework within which portfolio assessment is promoted or implemented in the Nepali education system is essential. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC, 2021b) has highlighted the need for learner-centered teaching, learning activities, and assessment guidelines for basic-level education in Nepal.

Although specific policies on portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching are absent, we can draw insights from broader education policies that emphasize the use of alternative and innovative assessment methods, i.e., formative and remedial measures for assessing students at the Basic level (grade 1-8) (Thapa, 2021). The policy particularly highlights the responsibility of teachers to adopt and maintain portfolios for each student, ensuring a comprehensive and personalized approach to assessment for better learning (Curriculum Development Center, 2076 BS). Similarly, the current National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2016-2022) of Nepal and the Curriculum Development Center (2076 BS) guidelines provide overarching principles for assessment in which these official documents have clearly

stated the importance of implementing portfolio-based assessment. These documents also advocate for integrating various assessment approaches to cater to diverse learning needs and styles.

Furthermore, Nepal's Ministry of Education (2016) has issued guidelines or circulars regarding school assessment practices. These documents could offer some directions on the implementation of portfolio-based assessment. However, it is crucial to explore whether these policies are being effectively implemented at the school level and whether teachers are aware of and have adopted portfolio assessment practices.

In critiquing the policies, assessing whether they adequately address the practical challenges and considerations related to portfolio-based assessment is crucial. Factors such as teacher training, availability of resources, infrastructure, and time allocation for assessment should be considered. Moreover, the alignment between portfolio assessment practices and broader curriculum objectives and standards must be examined.

Given the potential gaps and limitations in the existing policies, this study explores the actual implementation and effectiveness of portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching at basic-level schools in Kathmandu. By delving into the perceptions, experiences, and practices of teachers and students, this study identifies the challenges, successes, and areas for improvement in implementing portfolio assessment. The policy discussed above is directly aligned with the agenda of this research as it guides me to explore the effectiveness of portfolio-based assessment with the available policy guidelines in mind.

Social Constructivism as Theoretical Referent

The Social Constructivism theory, developed by Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes how social interactions influence learners' cognitive development. (Vygotsky,1978) defined learning as a collaborative process where individuals construct knowledge through interaction with others and their environment. According to Vygotsky, knowledge is constructed collaboratively. During early childhood, a child relies heavily on others, particularly parents, who guide their actions by providing instructions on what to do, how to do it, and what to avoid. These directives are primarily communicated through language. Vygotsky's theory suggests learning occurs when children interact and collaborate to exchange knowledge. Initially, a child performs new tasks with the support of a more experienced individual, such as a

parent or teacher. Over time, the child internalizes the process, gaining the ability to complete the task independently. Thus, social interaction plays a critical role in facilitating learning.

Portfolio-based assessment aligns with Vygotsky's theory as it provides opportunities for students to interact, collaborate, and reflect on their learning over time. Using portfolios promotes teamwork, allowing students to receive feedback from peers and teachers and enhancing their understanding through social interaction. In this regard, Heberle et al. (2020) also agreed with Vygotsky's ideas that learners gather 'tools' from older individuals within their social networks, helping them learn and grow through these interactions. In portfolio making, these tools represent the objects prepared and artifacts developed by students to demonstrate their learning.

The social constructivist approach of Vygotsky (1978) is related to my research because it advocates that social information about students helps them guide their learning process. Reviewing the advocacy of the Social Constructivist theory would guide me by providing the theoretical route for my research.

In this research, the Social Constructivist perspective is the theoretical framework to explore portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching. Constructivism emphasizes that learners construct their knowledge actively rather than passively receiving information. The Socio Constructivist theory fits well with portfolio assessment, where students select, organize, and reflect on their work, which is an integral part of the learning process. The categories of the theory in my research agenda I mentioned below:

Dialectic Process

The dialectic process is one of the major aspects of social constructivism theory, as described by Vygotsky, which refers to the constant interplay between learners and social and cultural environments. It also facilitates cognitive development through dialogue and interaction. The dialectic process creates a dynamic learning environment where students actively question, analyze, and refine their knowledge, embodying the core principle of Social Constructivist Theory (Daniels, 2001). The concern of social interaction will only be possible when we ask for students' information. In the context of portfolio-based assessment, this process allows learners to reflect on their work, receive constructive feedback from peers and

teachers, and improve their understanding. By engaging in these processes, learners interact with peers, teachers, and their environment to co-construct understanding.

This category can be implemented in the research agenda by focusing on how portfolio-based assessment facilitates ongoing dialogue between learners, teachers, and peers. Exploring students' portfolios would be the best way to assess their abilities as it provides the space for interaction between students and teachers (Shrestha, 2019). My research explored how these interactions promote more profound engagement with the language learning process, enabling students to articulate their thoughts and develop their language skills through reflective feedback cycles. I also observed one-to-one direct feedback among students, teachers, and parents when collaborating with them. This situation also makes their learning evident for effective learning.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The core concept of ZPD has been coined from the theory of Vygotsky (1978), which defines a gap between what learners can achieve independently and what they can achieve with guided support. (Vygotsky, 1978) emphasized that learning occurs most effectively within this Zone when teachers provide scaffolding to help students reach a higher level of understanding. In portfolio-based assessment, ZPD is crucial as students work on language tasks slightly beyond their current capabilities. Teachers, acting as facilitators, provide scaffolding to help learners reach their potential, offering support and feedback throughout the process.

Supporting the further functional level of ZPD, Vygotsky (1978) highlighted that ZPD can be used for research as it allows for examining how portfolio tasks challenge students within their ZPD, promoting growth. It also enables exploration of the role of teacher scaffolding and peer collaboration in helping students achieve higher language proficiency.

As the research explored how portfolios reflect students' progression as they move through their ZPD, the level of understanding and the required guidance for them to achieve was offered from the acceptance of this theory. I claim that until and unless a teacher gathers information about their students, they cannot support or evaluate them for further learning. Vygotsky (1978) advocates that we know our students through ZPD first and then help them gradually develop their further education. This concept aligns with my purpose, and so does my approach.

As a researcher, I have understood from the above discourse that the concept of ZPD suggests that the portfolio-based assessment supports students' learning by providing them with comprehensive input, which is (i +1). It facilitates growth through continuous feedback and reflection. In this process, students can collect their learning evidence with the help of their peers and teachers.

Mediation in SCT

Mediation in Social Constructivism involves using cultural tools, symbols, and interactions to facilitate cognitive growth (Cole, 1996). In this context, portfolios are mediating tools that allow students to demonstrate their learning, reflect on their progress, and receive guidance. In portfolio-based assessment, students interact with teachers and peers through feedback mechanisms, rubrics, and self-assessment, mediating their learning and guiding their cognitive development.

This research agenda here focuses on investigating the role of portfolio-based assessment (PBA) in mediation language learning. It explores how portfolios showcase students' skills, facilitate feedback-driven improvement, and encourage reflective practices. Specifically, it examines the mediating role of teacher and peer feedback in shaping students' understanding and self-reflection during the portfolio process. Additionally, it considers how portfolios help students organize their thoughts, track progress, and engage in meaningful reflection on their language learning journey. Alternatively, it aligns with theoretical frameworks such as Vygotsky's concepts of mediation within Social Constructivist Theory (SCT) and references from Shrestha (2015). The research explores how this interaction promotes more profound engagement with the language learning process, enabling students to articulate their thoughts and develop their language skills through a reflective feedback cycle.

I used the theoretical notions of Social Constructivism theory from the above discussion, as it offers a valuable framework for portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching (Vygotsky, 1978). It highlights the active role of learners in constructing knowledge through interaction and reflection, aligning well with the principles of portfolio-based learning. By incorporating the dialectic process, ZPD, and mediation, this research can uncover how portfolio-based assessment fosters dynamic, social, and reflective learning environments that support students' language development and also allow teachers to keep a regular progressive provide of their

students. Based on this, it considers the practical challenges teachers encounter in implementing portfolio assessments, providing insights into how this method can be more effectively integrated into classroom practices.

Review of Previous Studies

Portfolio-based assessment is well-known in teaching and learning as it is mostly used in teaching and learning. Several research studies have been carried out to explore different dimensions of portfolio-based assessment. Portfolio-Based Assessment (PBA) has gained increasing attention in language teaching and learning due to its ability to promote reflective learning, student engagement, and self-assessment. Different studies, including national and international ones, have highlighted the role of PBA in enhancing language education. In this section, I have presented the review report of studies I have read and gained insights into further research on my issue.

In Nepal, Shrestha (2015) and Gurung (2017) studied the importance of portfolio-based assessment and concluded that PBA improved reflective learning and encouraged more active student participation in classroom activities. Similarly, Harris (2016) conducted research on the critical dimension of PBA by highlighting how PBA can help students engage more deeply with language learning by promoting critical thinking. Similarly, international research such as Harris (2016) in the UK and Wang (2017) in China showed that PBA was influential in developing students' writing and speaking skills by encouraging self-reflection and ownership over their learning process.

Some national studies have also been reviewed to explore the conditions of PBA in the local context. While there, I traced Karki (2020), highlighting that student engagement and motivation are closely tied to using PBA in classrooms. For example, students in Kathmandu Valley schools felt a greater responsibility for their learning when portfolios were used, which increased motivation. This finding aligns with international studies like Smith (2014) in Australia, where PBA was linked to a shift toward more student-centered learning approaches. Despite these positive outcomes, several studies have highlighted challenges in implementing PBA effectively. In Nepal, Basnet (2019) and Lama (2021) pointed out large class sizes, additional teacher workload, and insufficient training as barriers to successful PBA implementation. These challenges were also identified in international studies, such as

those of Martinez (2018) in Spain and Ali (2019) in Malaysia, where teachers faced difficulties integrating PBA with traditional assessment methods. To overcome these challenges, strategic interventions are necessary. Nepalese and international research emphasizes the importance of providing teachers with professional development, clear assessment criteria, and administrative support. Harris (2016) and Ali (2019) argued that comprehensive teacher training and manageable workloads are essential for the effective implementation of PBA.

The above national and international studies primarily discussed the benefits and challenges of PBA in enhancing student engagement, motivation, and self-reflection (Karki, 2020; Harris, 2016). However, only a few studies investigate the practical implementation of PBA in classroom settings, particularly in the context of English language teaching. Research conducted by Lama (2021) and Ali (2019) identifies logistical challenges and the need for more teacher training in successfully implementing PBA. Similarly, Awasthi (2003) highlights that the traditional assessment process was used to maintain discipline among students, which directly created a kind of mental pressure for children and their parents. Awasthi intended to reveal that the traditional assessment was not student-friendly because it was one of the punishing tools rather than formative. However, little attention has been given to teachers' strategies for integrating PBA into their teaching routines. There remains a lack of detailed understanding of the types of tasks included in portfolios, the nature of feedback, and the overall assessment processes in the Nepali context. This gap underscores the necessity for a deeper exploration of how PBA is operationalized in basic-level English language classrooms in Kathmandu schools.

Furthermore, much of the existing research, including studies by Wang (2017) and Martinez (2018), tends to focus either on teachers' or students' perspectives individually without examining both groups' viewpoints simultaneously. To understand PBA comprehensively, it is crucial to explore teachers' and students' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. This gap is particularly significant in understanding how PBA influences classroom dynamics and the learning environment. Addressing both perspectives would provide richer insights into the strengths and challenges of PBA and lead to a more holistic view of its impact.

Based on the above discussion, implementing portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching at the basic level in Kathmandu would be one of the best

rationales for this study. It investigates practical aspects of PBA and gathers insights from teachers and students to provide a nuanced understanding of its effectiveness and challenges. By filling these gaps, the study contributes to the broader literature on PBA, offering valuable recommendations for improving its integration into English language education in Nepali schools.

Finally, Shrestha (2015) and Lama (2021) suggested that reducing class sizes, offering consistent teacher training, and improving resources could help address logistical challenges and enhance the use of PBA in schools. These studies collectively illustrate that while PBA has significant potential to improve language teaching and learning, its success depends on addressing practical challenges such as teacher preparation, resource availability, and support structures. By tackling these issues, schools in Nepal can better use PBA to promote holistic student development and deeper engagement in language learning.

Research Gap

Reviewing the previous studies from various sources, I found that the earlier studies have uncovered several critical gaps, pointing to the need for further research on portfolio-based assessment (PBA), particularly within the context of English language teaching in Nepali schools. Although PBA has been explored in international and Nepali educational settings, a notable lack of research focused on its implementation in basic-level schools in Kathmandu, Nepal. Most existing studies, such as those conducted by Shrestha (2015) and Gurung (2017), primarily address secondary education, leaving an underexplored area in understanding how PBA functions at the basic level. This gap highlights the need for research that explicitly examines teachers' perceptions, experiences, and practices regarding PBA in teaching English at the basic level, where distinct dynamics and challenges may exist.

Conceptual Framework

This section recaps the conceptual framework of the whole study. It is about different components of my research that helped me lead the roadmap to construct a new body of knowledge.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the PBA

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Portfolio-Based Assessment          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│ Social           │   │ Teachers' Perception and │   │   Methodology    │
│ Constructivist   │   │ Practices of PBA in ELE  │   └──────────────────┘
│ (Knowledge       │   │ classroom in Nepal       │   ┌──────────────────┐
│ through          │   │  (Stories and experiences)│   │   Qualitative    │
│ Interaction and  │   │ Understanding and        │   └──────────────────┘
│ Tasks)           │   │ Effectiveness of PBA     │   ┌──────────────────┐
│                  │   │ PBA, Active Learner      │   │  Interpretative  │
│                  │   │ Engagement, Reflective   │   └──────────────────┘
│                  │   │ Practices,  Self-Assessment│  ┌──────────────────┐
└──────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘   │    Narrative     │
                                                        └──────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Basic Level English Teachers │              │    Interview     │
        └──────────────────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
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This study's conceptual framework is grounded in social constructivism and the principles of portfolio-based assessment. Social constructivism posits that knowledge and understanding emerge from collaborative and interactive processes, with learners constructing knowledge through active participation in meaningful tasks. In the context of language learning, this theory suggests that students acquire language skills more effectively through engagement, interaction, and authentic language practice. This supports the notion that language proficiency develops dynamically and socially meaningfully.

Portfolio-based assessment aligns well with the tenets of social constructivism by emphasizing active learner engagement, reflective practices, and self-assessment. Through portfolios, learners actively participate in the assessment process, allowing them to document their progress, achievements, and areas needing improvement. This

approach nurtures learner autonomy, encouraging students to self-reflect and develop metacognitive skills as they curate and review their language-learning artefacts.

The theoretical framework centres on several interconnected concepts. It is the first social constructivism that underscores the importance of social interaction and collaboration in building knowledge and language skills. Portfolio-based assessment emphasizes using portfolios to assess and document learners' language progress and achievements. Learner engagement highlights students' active role in selecting, organizing, and reflecting on their work, fostering ownership of their learning. Kastely reflection and self-reflection underscore the importance of critical self-reflection, helping the learners identify areas for growth and actively participate in their development.

Social constructivism and portfolio-based assessment offer a theoretical basis for understanding teachers' perceptions and practices regarding portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching at the basic level in Kathmandu, Nepal. This framework directs the study's exploration of how teachers perceive and implement portfolio assessment in supporting students' language acquisition in practical and socially rich environments.

Chapter Summary

Initially, I went through various related literature to clarify the concept. Introducing the concepts with different definitions, themes that contribute to exploring this review include assessment in language teaching and learning, portfolio-based assessment, student engagement and motivation, challenges and barriers in implementing portfolio assessment, and strategies for optimizing portfolio-based assessment. After that, I explored the theory of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which supports collaboration and group learning activities guided by teachers and mentors. Having explored some previous research studies and policies of the Government of Nepal, I drew the research gap for my research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overall, this chapter discusses the methodological aspects of this research study. I first present the philosophical route of my reach by highlighting ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The methodology of the proposed study includes the philosophical premises, research paradigm, and research design.

Philosophical Assumptions

The philosophical assumptions of this study align with constructivism. In this study, social reality is seen as constructed through the interactions and interpretations of individuals involved in the educational context. The focus is on understanding how English language teachers perceive and practice portfolio assessment and how these perceptions and practices influence students' learning and achievement.

Ontology

In research, ontology shows that researcher perception and understanding are subjective, allowing for multiple realities. In this regard, Ponterotto (2005) emphasizes that constructivist-interpretive paradigms acknowledge the existence of numerous socially constructed realities. Ontology in narrative inquiry is relational, temporal, and continuous (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The reality of the study was built with the relationship between the researcher and participants based on their stories of a particular time, and it is continuous, so the reality may not be the same from person to person. As a result, I believed that the realities existed in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially, based on the local self and others (Guba, 1990, as cited in Lincoln & Denzin, 2003).

It is true that reality is subjective and may differ from person to person in the narrative inquiry because the same story or experience may not be true to the other individuals. Gergen (2009) stated that the reality of qualitative study is socially constructed, and researchers have a part in creating it by framing questions and collecting and analyzing the narratives. As a narrative researcher, I saw the nature of the reality of my study as socially constructed and contextual. Therefore, I gave due respect to each story or experience of the researchers to see it as my story. I analyzed the information, considering that it has multiple meanings in its context. Therefore,

my ontological assumption concerns the nature of the world, which is socially constructed and embedded in my participants' day-to-day life experiences and the story.

Epistemology

The nature of knowledge and the interaction between knower and knower remain subjective in the qualitative study. For my research, the epistemological assumption depends on the concept that knowledge is shared information and stories by the participants. It is contextual and embedded with the experience that the research participants had in their teaching and learning. Richards (2003) stated that it is the scientific study of knowledge and the relationship between knowers and known. Likewise, VanderStoep and Johnson (2009) state that knowledge is constructed through communication and interaction; therefore, it is found within the perceptions and interpretations of the individual rather than out of them. I understood the knowledge from the participant's point of view. It was constructed by the participants based on their experience, understanding, and context. Therefore, the participants' realities, perceptions, experiences, and stories are the foundation of knowledge for my study.

Axiology

My axiological stance as a narrative researcher is to value diverse perspectives. Since the values are multiple and have equal significance in a narrative inquiry, I tried to value each incident, shared ideas, experience, and story with full attention and respect. "Values of being, about what human states are to be valued simply because of what they are" (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 287). My concern about multiple values with multiple significance helped me grab the thick descriptions of the narratives collected from the participants. As an interpretive researcher, I value the knowledge and understanding gained through experience and exposure. It led me to work on my philosophical understanding. At the same time, I gave much value to every experience, story, and incident of the research participants. Subjective values were given due respect and appreciation while conducting this study. Therefore, I tried to value the participants' realities despite my principles. Hence, every account of the narrative was interpreted while generating meaning.

The philosophical assumptions of this study provide a foundation for understanding and interpreting the social reality of English language teachers'

perceptions and practices of portfolio assessment. The constructivist paradigm allows for a nuanced exploration of the multiple perspectives involved in implementing portfolio assessment, contributing to a deeper understanding of its potential benefits and challenges in the context of English language teaching.

Interpretive Paradigm

Considering my research purpose, I situated my research paradigm as a basic route concern of any academic research as it widens the area of exploration. Taylor and Medina (2011) stated that multiple perspectives exist, and meaning is derived from the participants' social interactions, experiences, and interpretations. I acknowledge their role as an active interpreter and aim to co-construct knowledge with the participants. In this study, I value the voices and experiences of the English language teachers. Their perspectives are crucial in understanding the implementation, challenges, and optimization of portfolio-based assessment in the context of English language teaching. I also value the potential of portfolio assessment to support students' learning and growth.

Rather than developing a new paradigm, I follow the constructivist paradigm, which aligns well with the research questions and objectives. Constructivism provides a theoretical framework that explores the participants' subjective experiences and interpretations concerning portfolio assessment in English language teaching. The researchers discover or unpack the phenomenon of interest in the natural setting (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As a narrative inquirer, I tried my best to understand the phenomena in terms of the meanings of the people from their social and real contexts. By adopting the constructivist paradigm, I uncover the complexities and nuances of portfolio assessment while acknowledging the influence of social interactions, cultural contexts, and individual perspectives on the implementation and outcomes of this assessment approach. As Cohen et al. (2018) suggested, the constructivist approach is fundamentally rooted in interpretivism, which emphasizes understanding the subjective meaning individuals assign to their experiences in a specific context. In my research, I used the interpretive research paradigm as it allowed me to understand the effectiveness of PBA from the perspective of my participants. I interpreted their sharing from their perspective without being biased.

Narrative Inquiry as My Research Method

Research design is an overall plan and procedure for the whole study, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Through research design, a researcher sets out answers to the research questions. The purpose of selecting methodology guides research design. It is the preparation of the design or the conceptual framework of research. A research design is the researcher's procedural plan to deliver the facts. It indicates that the research design is a procedure or plan of a researcher to accomplish an investigation of the finding that is valid, objective, and accurate and finishes in an intended time and budget. Cohen et al. (2018) opine that research design and strategy provide the researcher with answers to specific research questions and a clear plan of action if the research is to have momentum and purpose. Working without a plan is just like a boat without a sailor. Research is a path to finding the destination. The goal of a researcher is to find hidden facts. To investigate the factual things a researcher should do, they must have proper guidelines.

The narrative method had a long literary tradition of reporting the art of narrative. It indicated the meaning of events. In this sense, Saldana (2015) stated that a narrative is a storied account of events, a symbolic representation of knowledge and experiences. The constructivist paradigm, by its key assumptions, facilitated me in exploring the subjective world of research participants and developing an understanding of their experiences. In doing so, I used narrative, as it always positions stories. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), narrative inquiry was the study of experiences. In this regard, I used participants' life experiences in the form of stories about their perceptions of portfolio assessment in the English language classroom.

Through narrative study, I documented my participants' attitudes, feelings, and stories in written form. Saldana (2015) stated that it encourages a researcher to document self and participants' perceptions in written forms representing participants' meaning. I explored the personal and professional stories of teachers' practices of portfolio-based assessment in their community schools.

In narrative inquiry, different dimensions show how humans have stories. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) mentioned the three-dimensional spaces of narrative inquiry, i.e., interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (place). It motivated others to be dynamic and constantly receive change

through narrative inquiry. Therefore, narrative inquiry was well suited to address the complications and details of human experience in adopting portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching and learning. Likewise, Satre (1964, as cited in Webster & Mertova, 2007) states that narrative inquiry captures teachers' stories in the form of experiences since all the teachers have different tales to share. This was why, to explore teachers' perceptions and practices of using portfolio-based assessment in the English language classroom, I followed the narrative inquiry method that helped me underpin participants' personal narrative experiences.

The nature of this study is qualitative. Qualitative research was appropriate for addressing the research issue of exploring English language teachers' perceptions and practices of portfolio assessment. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and meanings teachers attach to portfolio assessment in English language teaching. Therefore, I pictured different aspects of this research study, from the research process concerning collecting, sampling, and analyzing data to teachers' perceptions and practices of portfolio assessment within their specific educational context.

Research Participants Selection

The research site for this study is an urban district selected based on the presence of schools and English language teachers who have adopted portfolio assessments in their teaching practices. I visited six school leaders to identify teachers with PBA expertise who have been using PBA to some extent. I met them informally for their positionality and clarity of PBA in understandings and practices. I found that three of them have in-depth knowledge, and they are incorporating PBA with interest to some extent. I only incorporated three out of six to meet the purpose of my study who were fully experienced in implementing portfolio-based assessments in their teaching. The choice of an urban setting is strategic, aiming to capture the dynamics of portfolio assessment implementation in a context where there is a higher concentration of schools and potentially better access to resources for English language teaching, which can influence both the effectiveness and challenges of portfolio assessments (Klenowski, 2002).

Participants in this study consist of English language teachers actively applying portfolio assessments chosen through purposive sampling. I focused on their at least three years of teaching experience, participation in relevant training or

professional development on portfolio assessments, and a minimum of one academic year of portfolio assessment application in their classrooms. Selecting participants who meet these criteria ensures that they possess foundational experience in English language instruction, familiarity with various assessment strategies, and a comprehensive understanding of portfolio assessment principles (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). This background facilitates more thorough discussions and insights into their perceptions, enabling an exploration of the strategies, modifications, and challenges they encounter in integrating portfolio assessments effectively (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such criteria support a nuanced understanding of the practicalities of portfolio assessments within the teachers' contextual experiences.

This research study has taken three participants. This is a qualitative study where even a single person can be also taken for the research study (Carlsson et al., 2009). The participants in this study are experienced educators with diverse teaching and professional development backgrounds, particularly in portfolio-based assessment. Each has undergone various training programs and applied portfolio assessment practices in their classrooms.

Sushil (P1) has an extensive 25 years of teaching experience and has participated in various professional development activities. He has completed training in Teacher Professional Development (TPD), coordinator of IT, psychosocial support, career guidance, and the transdisciplinary approach, integrating multiple subjects into a cohesive learning experience. Sushil implements portfolio-based assessments for grades 6, 7, and 8, allowing him to evaluate students' progress through various assignments and projects over time rather than relying solely on traditional exams.

Preeti (P2) has taught for 11 years and gained expertise by participating in multiple training programs. She has undergone training in TPD, the transdisciplinary approach, the integrated curriculum, and the examination coordinator, which encourages blending different subjects to provide a more holistic learning experience. Preeti applies portfolio-based assessment across various grades, including grades 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7. This method allows her to assess students' growth and learning through diverse tasks that reflect their progress in various subjects.

Sarita (P3), with 8 years of teaching experience, has focused her professional development on the transdisciplinary approach and integrated curriculum. She has

implemented portfolio-based assessments in grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7, enabling her to track her students' learning progress. This approach provides a more personalized evaluation of students' abilities and helps Sarita better understand their strengths and areas for improvement across multiple subjects.

Data Collection Process

The data collection for this study primarily involves primary data sources obtained through qualitative research methods. The main data collection tool for this study was semi-structured interviews. Additionally, classroom observations and document analysis complemented and triangulated the data.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Keeping the purpose of my research and the issue I have selected in mind, I conducted semi-structured interviews with three basic-level English language teachers who are actively using portfolio assessments in their classrooms. The interviews followed an interview guide with open-ended questions designed to delve into the teachers' perceptions of portfolio assessments, their practical experiences, the specific challenges they encountered, the strategies they employed to address these challenges, and their overall reflections on the effectiveness of portfolio assessment in enhancing English language teaching. With the participants' consent, I recorded interviews to ensure an accurate record of their responses, following guidelines by Creswell and Poth (2018), and Merriam and Tisdell (2016). The guidelines they suggested include preparation, ethical considerations, and recording interviews, which are followed in the interview process.

Meaning-Making and Analysis Process

In this study, I followed a detailed data analysis process that involved multiple stages: data entry, cleaning, transcription (where necessary), coding, thematizing, and interpreting the findings. In the beginning, to validate the transcribed contents, I confirmed my understanding with the participant's narration collected through the interview. I sent the transcribed report of the interviews to the participants to read and confirm my knowledge of their sharing by following the guidelines of Saldana (2015). After the participants confirmed, I generated codes from the transcribed data and grouped the codes for the theme-generating process.

Following Saldana's (2015) approach to thematic coding, I began with open coding by closely reviewing the data line by line to uncover meaningful units,

concepts, and patterns. These codes emerged directly from the data and were then organized into broader categories, allowing me to establish a clear coding framework of themes and sub-themes. During the thematizing phase, I grouped similar codes under more prominent themes that represented the core ideas and patterns found in the data. Using a constant comparative method, I compared data across interviews and observations to highlight consistencies and differences. Through a reflective process, I refined and revised these themes to ensure they accurately captured the essence of the data. Finally, I analyzed these themes in connection with the research questions, theoretical framework, and existing literature, leading to a coherent and insightful interpretation of the findings.

In the first cycle, open coding involves breaking the data into discrete parts, allowing the researcher to examine it line by line and identify meaningful units of information, concepts, and patterns. Codes are generated inductively based on the data, emphasizing participants' experiences without imposing preconceived categories. This first cycle of open coding is the initial step in the coding process, where I break down qualitative data into smaller, manageable parts. This phase is crucial for identifying key concepts, terms, and patterns from the data. I systematically review each data line, assigning codes to segments that capture essential ideas or themes. For example, I identify phrases such as portfolio enhances learning or challenges in implementation as potential codes. Codes are generated based solely on the data without imposing preconceived categories. This allows for discovering new insights and perspectives that may not have been initially considered. Emphasize the subtleties in participants' experiences and opinions (Saldana, 2015). For instance, a participant may express uncertainty about the effectiveness of portfolio assessments, and this sentiment can be coded as uncertainty about effectiveness.

The second cycle, axial coding, involves organizing the open codes into categories based on their relationships, identifying sub-categories, and exploring how they interconnect. This process refines the data and outlines the structure of the themes. Axial coding involves connecting and organizing the open codes into categories based on their relationships. This phase refines the data and structures the themes identified in the first cycle. The researcher groups open codes into broader categories. For example, I might categorize codes related to "teacher perceptions" (e.g., positive impact, negative experiences) and "student engagement" (e.g.,

increased motivation, active participation). Further, it explores how different categories relate to each other. For instance, under the category "challenges faced," I might have sub-categories such as lack of resources, "time constraints," and "student resistance." (Saldana, 2015). Create diagrams or charts to visually represent the categories' relationships, helping clarify connections and hierarchies within the data.

In the third cycle, selective coding, the researcher integrates and refines the identified themes and categories, focusing on core themes that represent the essence of the data. This phase assists in forming a coherent narrative that addresses the research objectives. In this phase, the researcher focuses on integrating and refining the themes identified in the previous cycles. Selective coding helps form a coherent narrative that addresses the research questions and objectives. From the categories created during axial coding, identify core themes that encapsulate the essence of the findings. For example, themes might include "impact on student learning" and "teacher preparedness." Begin to craft a narrative or theoretical framework that ties the themes together, providing a comprehensive overview of how portfolio-based assessment is perceived and practiced. This might involve linking the core themes back to your research objectives. The data collected supports the identified themes (Saldana, 2015). This consists of revisiting specific interview excerpts or observational notes that align with the core themes.

Finally, the fourth cycle, thematic coding, consolidates and synthesizes the findings into broader themes that reflect major patterns and insights from the data. This phase allows for a more in-depth interpretation of the data regarding recent literature and theoretical frameworks, ensuring the themes provide meaningful insights into the research questions (Saldana, 2015). Thematic coding consolidates and synthesizes findings into broader themes, providing an in-depth interpretation of the data. This phase facilitates deeper analysis concerning existing literature and theoretical frameworks. Group similar themes and examine how they interact and overlap. For instance, the theme of "teacher readiness" might be closely linked to "student outcomes" and "resources." Engage in a reflective practice to evaluate the generated themes. This involves considering whether the themes accurately represent the data and provide meaningful insights. Questions like, "Do these themes align with existing literature?" or "What new understandings emerge from this analysis?" Relate my findings to the literature review. This may involve contrasting my themes with

previous studies on portfolio-based assessment and identifying gaps or new contributions to the field.

By applying Saldana's four coding cycles, I ensure a systematic and thorough analysis of qualitative data. This approach not only aids in uncovering rich insights into teachers' perceptions and practices of portfolio-based assessment but also contributes to the research's overall transferability and rigour. The insights gained through this analysis can inform educational practices and policymaking in the context of portfolio-based assessment, ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes.

As my research is qualitative, I used a comprehensive data analysis process following Saldana's (2015) thematic coding approach. The initial stages involved data entry, cleaning, and transcription, which is essential for preparing the data for in-depth analysis. Using open coding as a first step, I closely examined each data line to identify meaningful concepts, patterns, and insights. Codes were generated inductively from the data, capturing recurring themes related to teachers' experiences, perceptions, and strategies for implementing Portfolio-Based Assessment. I then categorized these initial codes into broader groups, establishing a preliminary framework of themes and sub-themes that formed the basis of my analysis.

Building on this, I proceeded with a thematizing phase, grouping similar codes into overarching themes that captured central ideas emerging from the data. Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize a constant comparative approach in this note. I compared data across interviews and observations, seeking commonalities and differences to refine the themes. Throughout this process, I engaged in reflective analysis to adjust and refine themes, ensuring they accurately represented the data. Once the themes were established, I connected them to my research objectives, relevant literature, and theoretical frameworks, allowing me to interpret the findings to highlight the practical implications and insights into Portfolio-Based Assessment.

Quality Standards

Ensuring the credibility and transferability of the study is essential for maintaining the quality of the research. Credibility refers to confidence in the truth of the findings, while transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following describes the quality standards and measures to maintain credibility and transferability.

Researcher Positionality

The researcher's positionality, including their biases, assumptions, and personal experiences, is explicitly acknowledged and reflected upon throughout the research process. In this support, Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that awareness helps minimize potential biases and ensure data collection, analysis, and interpretation transparency. I tried my best to acknowledge my research ethic and maintain standards in my research process. I have clearly stated my personal and professional background information in the introduction section of this research, highlighting my interest, education, and teaching experiences, which also helps my readers to understand my positionality for this research.

Verisimilitude

Verisimilitude refers to the ability of the researcher to produce a realistic portrayal of the participants' experiences. Verisimilitude is crucial for creating a sense of authenticity and believability in qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2018). The study provides readers with a vivid and believable understanding of the research topic by ensuring that the data and interpretations resonate with the participants' realities. This quality enhances the credibility of the findings and helps convey the complexity of teachers' experiences with portfolio assessment.

Reflexivity

As a researcher, I engaged in ongoing research activities reflecting the progress made toward improving research practices. Generally, this technique allows researchers to critically examine their role in the research process and how it may influence data collection and interpretation. This iterative process of self-examination and external feedback enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the research (Berger, 2015). I also did the same, including daily reflection on the research activity. I also acknowledged personal biases and assumptions by continuously reflecting on their positionality, ensuring the influence of the study's findings. This practice involves maintaining a journal or field notes where reflections on the research process, interactions with participants, and preliminary interpretations are recorded and analyzed. Reflexivity also includes seeking feedback from peers and mentors to challenge and refine the researcher's perspectives.

Context

The context of this study is an urban district in Nepal, chosen for its high density of schools and availability of resources for English language teaching. This setting provides a rich environment for exploring the implementation and challenges of portfolio assessment, as it includes a variety of schools with different levels of access to educational resources and professional development opportunities. The urban context also allows selecting participants to have diverse experiences and perspectives on portfolio-based assessment, providing a comprehensive understanding of its practice in different school environments. In this support, Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that this district's socio-cultural and educational policies were considered to understand how they influence teachers' perceptions and practices.

Spatiality

Spatiality refers to the physical and social spaces in which the research takes place. This study encompasses the classrooms, schools, and the broader educational environment where portfolio-based assessment is implemented. It involves examining how the physical setup of classrooms, the availability of resources, and the school infrastructure impact the implementation of portfolio-based assessment. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that spatiality includes the social interactions within these spaces, such as the relationships between teachers, students, and administrators, and how these interactions shape the practice of portfolio-based assessment. In this support, Creswell and Poth (2018) highlighted that understanding spatiality helps analyze how different school environments and their physical and social characteristics influence the effectiveness and challenges of portfolio-based assessment.

Temporality

In narrative inquiry, seeing people, places, and events as in progress is critical because nothing lasts forever, and everything is always in transition. Temporality refers to the research's temporal dimensions, including the data collection timing and the historical context of portfolio assessment implementation (Schulenkorf & Adair, 2013). This study considers the temporal aspects by examining how teachers' experiences and portfolio assessment practices have evolved. It involves understanding the duration of teachers' experience with portfolio assessment, the changes in educational policies and practices, and the historical development of assessment methods in the district. By considering temporality, the research captures

the dynamic and evolving nature of portfolio-based assessment practices and their impact on teaching and learning over time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I also considered the importance of specifying time and context in this research. Temporality also includes the cyclical nature of the academic year and how different phases, such as the beginning of the term, mid-term assessments, and end-of-term evaluations, influence the implementation of portfolio-based assessment. Thus, as a researcher, I have shown a strong commitment to ensure that I abide by the guidelines formulated to exhibit the best temporality.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting my research, I placed a strong emphasis on integrity and the protection of my participants. I understood that addressing ethical considerations was vital for ensuring that my research process and findings were trustworthy and legally compliant. As Recker (2012) points out, ethics involves examining questions about morality, good or bad, right or wrong, and the concepts of justice and virtue. I was dedicated to maintaining high ethical standards throughout my study, being mindful of participants' gender, caste, ethnicity, and the diverse social backgrounds they represented. To uphold these moral principles, I took several necessary steps. First, I obtained informed consent from all participants, clearly explaining the purpose of the study, their role, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. I also ensured that confidentiality was a priority by anonymizing data and securely storing all information. Throughout the research, I treated each participant fairly and respectfully, actively working to eliminate potential biases. Adhering to these ethical practices created a trusting environment that allowed participants to feel comfortable and valued in sharing their experiences.

Informed Consent

Before beginning the data collection for my research, I informed the participating teachers about the purpose and nature of the study and the methods I would use to collect information (Zukauskas et al., 2018). I provided them with clear and detailed information about the research objectives, the procedures involved, potential risks and benefits, and how their confidentiality would be protected. All participants needed to understand their rights, so I obtained informed consent from everyone involved. I reassured them that their participation was completely voluntary

and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any negative repercussions.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Participants did not face any form of coercion or pressure to participate. They can decline participation or withdraw from the study without any negative consequences. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Autonomy of Participants

Participants' autonomy and decision-making were respected throughout the research process. They have the freedom to express their opinions, thoughts, and experiences without any influence or manipulation from the researcher. The researcher was a facilitator, ensuring participants' voices were heard and valued. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Participants' confidentiality and anonymity must be strictly maintained. All personal identifiers were removed from the data to ensure that participants could not be identified. Only the researcher accessed the data, and I stored it securely. Participants' information is ensured to be used solely for research purposes and will not be disclosed to any unauthorized individuals. (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I used pseudonyms to address my research participants and ensured that their information would be used for other purposes to maintain confidentiality in my research.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the overall methodological aspects and process are clearly stated. The methodology employed in this study focuses on philosophical assumptions, research paradigms, and research design. The study adopts a constructivist interpretive approach to explore English language teachers' perceptions and practices of portfolio-based assessment. The chapter concludes by addressing ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, and the importance of context, spatiality, and temporality in shaping how portfolio assessment practices evolve in various educational settings.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT AND

ITS COMPLEXITIES

In this chapter, I present the participants' narratives on portfolio-based assessment from their experience of assessing English as a teacher. This chapter addresses the overarching research question, i.e., how English language teachers understand portfolio-based assessments based on their practices. As this study embraced narrative inquiry, I re-tell English language teachers' experiences they shared in the interview. Experiences are written under different sub-titles aligning with the narrative genre. I also incorporate English language teachers' voices per the information and experience requirement to contextualize it. In a series of interviews with English language teachers, I gained valuable insights into my daily teaching experiences implementing PBA. Through their words, I delve into the world of these educators as they navigate the complexities of teaching English language skills to diverse groups of students.

Understanding Portfolio: Documentation of Learners' Progress

A portfolio in school evaluation is a carefully curated collection of a student's work that exhibits their struggle, development, and achievements over some time. This appraisal strategy gives a more all-encompassing view of a student's execution by counting work samples such as papers, progress, reports, and other assignments. Portfolios serve as a compelling elective or supplement to conventional testing by highlighting a student's improvement and authority of aptitudes and subjects (Paulson et al., 1991). While exploring the understanding of PBA, my participants shared their basic understanding based on the experiences they gained while implementing PBA. The first participant, Sushil, expressed:

> I keep portfolios to track students' performance.' I believe that a portfolio assists me in maintaining records of students' progress. I also indicated that parents should know how their children progress in their studies. Therefore, I focus on maintaining a record for each student through a portfolio and strongly support the idea of the portfolio. Teachers, parents, and students must

understand how their studies are progressing. Therefore, maintaining a record for each student is necessary, and I strongly support this idea.

Similarly, Sushil also claims that he systematically records the students' engagements to make a proper progress portfolio by keeping records on the laptop in an Excel file as an everyday record. *He stressed, "I also keep the record online by encouraging the students to send their information via email."* His sharing shows that a portfolio is a systematic record of student work that demonstrates students' progress in learning, skills, and achievements. Listening to the sharing of Mr. Sushil, it can be understood that teachers understand a portfolio as a systematic record of student work that demonstrates their learning progress, skills, and achievements as a record to parents, teachers, and students. Wolf and Dietiker (2018) have also stated the portfolios accurately reflect each student's progress by providing a comprehensive record of their work over time, showcasing their learning achievement, improvements, and areas needing further development through authentic tasks and self-assessment opportunities.

In this concern, Sushil also highlighted that every parent of children should know the updating of their children, as it assists them in supporting them as per their needs, and there will also be a one-to-one connection between them so that their conversation could contribute to their children's learning. It shows that the portfolio provided a space for interaction about the progress record of the children. It also provided space for dialogue and interaction with teachers and parents, as in the dialectic process of Vygotsky (1978), which focuses on discussion and interaction with others. It means understanding portfolio-based assessment as a space for dialectic engagement of students, teachers, and parents. In a similar vein, the next participant, mine, Preeti, also revealed a similar understanding of PBA by stating:

Based on the topic, whatever the child has done to learn, the document that we will keep on record does not mean that he will be able to come up with a good achievement at once. I will again take a remedial class in my own practice and put it in a group, and I have kept the practice. And not all, but to some extent, I have examples of children's learning achievement being upgraded through remedial classes.

As highlighted by Preeti, portfolio-based evaluation frequently incorporates records of their progress so that she can plan further for learning support. In this

regard, Barrett (2007) also highlighted that keeping students' learning records helps teachers use and resume the information for further planning. It shows that portfolio-based assessment is also an insight for developing student learning achievement. Vygotsky's concept of ZPD helps teachers provide comprehensive input to learners, as Preeti did through remedial classes.

Preeti further states that portfolio-based evaluation is a record that "allows students to evaluate their progress and self-reflective on *their learning. I have seen them progress by being self-reflective towards their work.*" She also highlighted that in this self-reflective process, the students could "*evaluate their work, set learning objectives, and reflect on their progress.*" It shows that portfolio-based assessment is such a record that engages students in a self-reflective process of their learning progress. It has helped Preeti to help their students grow in their critical thinking ability. This concern is stated by Srivastava and Shrivastava (2016), who state that making a portfolio itself is a process of critical self-awareness and making an individual a self-regulated lifelong learner. Similarly, for Paulson et al. (1991), such self-reflective practice makes students accountable for their learning as critical thinkers. As noted by educational researchers, portfolios help students become more mindful of their learning journey and understand the associations between different pieces of work, leading to a more comprehensive grasp of the subject matter. It aligns with the concept of Vygotsky (1978) about ZPD, which provides the facilitator with a clear distinction between the effort an individual could make for their learning and the space where the individual needs support and guidance. My concern is that the teachers' understanding of portfolio-based assessment offers a space for teachers to know their students and plan for further improvement.

In the further discussion on portfolio-based assessment as a systematic record, Sushil shared his experience that he would keep a portfolio to track students' progress to understand learning and sociocultural factors of students learning. He expresses:

> *I keep portfolios to track students' performance. Maintaining a record for each student is necessary, and I strongly support this idea because it provides space and time for teachers to know students' sociocultural backgrounds. Knowing students' individual information would help students to treat them better and also support their further learning.*

Listening to the story of Shushi, portfolio assessment is not only a part of assessing students' learning but also a process of improving their learning dimension by enhancing teachers' relations and the treatment of students. It is possible as the portfolio provides a basic socio-cultural understanding of the student's background. This method helps students track their improvement and allows her to monitor their growth effectively. The experience is that learning is contextualized, meaningful, and rooted in the student's social and academic realities (Smith, 2020). Sushil's approach to portfolio management aligns closely with the principles of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (1978), which emphasizes the role of mediation as a social and cultural impact on the cognitive development of the learners. In this process, Sushil can figure out the learners' cognitive development. Interaction and structured guidance in the learning process. His systematic method, involving collecting, organizing, and evaluating student work, reflects a collaborative and scaffolded approach to students' cognitive development, properly understanding the students' socio-cultural background. Therefore, he remained open to receiving assignments via email, organizing them into structured folders, and using an Excel file to track performance. Sushil creates an environment where students' work is archived and actively analyzed to support and understand their growth.

The discussions led to different layers of understanding necessary in portfolio-based assessment practices. Preeti highlighted connecting portfolios with curricular assumptions. She states:

> *Only homework, exams, personality, and discipline are considered, and regular records are kept. The portfolio should be applied at least a little according to the curriculum. Whatever the child has done to learn is the document that we will keep on record.*

Preeti's sharing highlights her understanding of the portfolio as the assessment is possible by aligning it with the curriculum in a regular record-keeping process of student engagement. In this support, the current national curriculum framework (2016-2022) highlighted that a flexible assessment framework contributes to learning. The findings of Newman and Smolen (1993) can be linked, as they claimed that the meticulous practice of portfolios could enable teachers to learn appropriately with curricular goals and expand the use of activities in other curriculum areas. The above sharing can also be aligned with the concept of mediation by Vygotsky (1978)

because it suggests that documentation should be made and kept, and teachers should facilitate. This collaborative process provides spaces for mediation per the guidelines in the current curriculum.

Preeti explained that teaching different subjects such as English, Math, and Science is supported by portfolio-making because it helps teachers arrange everything by systematically organizing students' work. She said:

> As an exam coordinator, I use unpaid software to keep students' records. We see the students focus on classwork and document the best work systematically in the cupboard. There is a cupboard to arrange the students' work in an organized way. We can find it immediately.

It shows that portfolio-based assessment is a systematic process using digital software or a physical cupboard. For her, portfolio-based assessment is accessible for evaluating and supporting students with such a systematic arrangement of records. Tezci and Dikici (2006) highlight that both digital and traditional portfolio-based practices are there to support students by organizing their learning in a structured and systematic way. Her sharing indicates that she independently took the initiative of giving extra support for maintaining a portfolio of students and also supported other teachers for keeping a portfolio of their students, which taking the initiative of preserving PBA aligns with ZPD, and helping other teachers is linked with Mediation of Vigostly's (1978) theory of socio-constructivism. Similarly, Vygotsky's ZPD highlights the transition from guided to independent learning through scaffolding. Participants like Sarita stressed how portfolios encourage reflection, correction, and motivation, enabling students to achieve beyond their current capabilities. These findings illustrate how portfolios operationalize Vygotsky's SCT, fostering collaboration, structured guidance, and reflection to enhance learning outcomes. Another participant, Sarita, expressed:

> A portfolio is a tool or a teaching technique where we document all the work students have done throughout the year. It includes various assessments, projects, and any significant achievements. This documentation helps in evaluating their progress over time.

Listening to the experiences shared by Sarita clearly shows that portfolio assessment helps students enhance their engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes. As she stressed, a portfolio includes student activities such as completed

assignments, regular project work in each unit, and progressive remarks and feedback over time. Some recent studies highlight that a portfolio-based assessment helps teachers systematically collect, manage, and record students' regular activities and progress by providing different digital tools. Her concern can also be attributed to the concept of mediation under the theoretical notion of social constructivism proposed by Vygotsky (1978) because she stressed that portfolio-making offers different data management tools for teachers. Adding further on her classroom practices, she further added:

> *There are different ways through which we can assess students' progress. However, it became evident that portfolio-based assessment goes beyond traditional methods of evaluation by providing a comprehensive record of students' progress, achievements, and areas for improvement. I encouraged my colleagues to use PBA in their classroom teaching.*

The above sharing highlights that the portfolio-based assessment approach helps teachers replace traditional and holistic assessment approaches and bring modifications to their assessment process. Shrestha (2019) stated that the portfolio-based approach is one of the alternative approaches for student assessment. Similarly, Sarita stressed that by documenting diverse learning activities, projects, and assessments, teachers like Sarita can better understand each student's strengths and needs, thus enabling personalized instruction and support. Her practice aligns with Vygotsky's notion of ZPD because the portfolio-based assessment provides a lot of space for students' reflection, correction, and motivation for better performance. In an EFL classroom, portfolio assessment serves a similar purpose by helping teachers track students' language development, including critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills. These key components align with science process skills in STEM education. In both contexts, portfolios provide a holistic view of a student's progress, encouraging reflection, self-assessment, and active engagement with the learning material. In this support, (Shin et al., 2018) stated that collecting students' portfolios fosters deeper comprehension and promotes essential skills such as inquiry and experimentation in language acquisition in EFL. Therefore, portfolio-based assessments enhance students' language learning or science capabilities by cultivating reflective, self-regulated learners.

After listening to my participants' experiences, I tried my best to link them with the theoretical notion of the constructivism approach. After connecting them with the theoretical approach, I learned that a portfolio-based assessment offers a lot of space for teachers and students to rework previous learning of the students for formative purposes rather than summative ones. Supporting the discourse, Shrestha (2019) highlighted that assessing students through portfolio-making can facilitate them systematically because of its reflective approach. After going through the socio-constructivist approach's theoretical aspect, my participants' concern seems aligned with the notion of Vygotsky's ZPD and Dialectic approaches to socializing students in the learning realm.

Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (SCT) emphasizes learning through social interaction (Dialectic process), mediation by cultural tools, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners progress with guidance and collaboration. The Dialectic Process focuses on constructing knowledge through dialogue, shared responsibilities, and cooperation between peers, teachers, and parents. This aligns with the findings of participants like Sushil, who highlighted portfolios as tools for connecting teachers, students, and parents, enabling meaningful interactions that foster understanding. Similarly, Mediation, central to SCT, emphasizes the role of tools (rubrics, guidelines, technology) in bridging gaps in

learning. Preeti's systematic organization of portfolios through software and physical arrangements demonstrates how mediation supports learning by clarifying expectations and engaging parents in progress monitoring.

Figure 2

Portfolio as Documentation Process

Thus, the discussion could draw different understandings about portfolio documentation as presented in Figure No. 2. Portfolio assessment during the pandemic highlighted the importance of maintaining records to generate accurate

progress reports. It served as a tool for learning support, enabling assessments that guided students' educational development. Active engagement through reflective practice could encourage students to evaluate their learning processes. Understanding learners' socio-cultural backgrounds proved essential for tailoring assessments to their needs. Documentation of students' work was carefully aligned with the curriculum, ensuring consistency and relevance in the learning outcomes.

Understanding of Portfolio Assessment during Pandemic

Portfolio-based assessment has become a valuable tool in education practices for emphasizing student growth and active engagement over time. Embracing the deadening situation during the last pandemic was the primary concern of every teacher worldwide (Kapar & Bhandari, 2020). Exploring other teachers' concerns regarding how they adapted to the pandemic created by COVID-19 was one of the significant words in everybody's mouth. For this, I asked my participants to specify their experiences of adjusting to the situation from the perspective of teaching. While there, the participant, Ms. Preeti, shared:

> *I used Messenger to connect with parents during the pandemic, noting that while this was feasible for upper-class students, it was challenging for lower-class students. We also created messenger groups to send notices and connect with parents, but those without devices had to meet physically and provide hard copies.*

The experiences shared above by Preeti have highlighted a situation that mirrors findings on how digital communication can exclude disadvantaged students. She stressed that she used different ways to make her teaching flexible to adjust to the pandemic. The teaching flexibility also helped her be inclusive, as she provided different reading resources to differently abled students. Her experience reflects research indicating that the pandemic developed educational inequalities, with digital communication tools becoming essential yet highlighting differences in access (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Similarly, Preeti shared, *"Students with access to devices can send their work digitally. This makes it easier for me to review and give feedback right away. I use unpaid software and portfolio books to systematize student work."* Her experience underscores how digital portfolios enable efficient documentation and assessment of student work, as they offer a centralized and accessible format for both students and teachers (Barrett, 2007). This shift

underscores the need for equitable access to technology to ensure all students can fully participate in their education, a necessity highlighted by recent studies on the impact of technology on education during the pandemic (Di Pietro et al., 2020). Preeti's experience highlights the immediate need for equitable access to technology in education to ensure that all students can fully engage, particularly in digital communication and portfolio-based assessments during the pandemic.

In this support, Selwyn (2020) stated that digital communication mainly covers a wide range of audiences in a disadvantaged context. The reliance on digital tools during the pandemic underscores the importance of having proper technology for effective communication and portfolio management, as noted in various studies (Johnson, 2021). From this, I understood that the digital tools made her adjust during the pandemic, which is aligned with mediation because her sharing emphasizes the role of tools (rubrics, guidelines, technology) in bridging gaps in learning. During the pandemic, keeping individual records became crucial to adjusting to the new educational challenges. As Sushil said:

> *During the pandemic, teachers were instructed to think about the possible strategies to run the class and their evaluation. Following the instructions, I started searching for ways out and found a portfolio, one of the simplest ways to assess students even during pandemic times. I started maintaining individual records, which emerged as a crucial aspect. Then, I made a rubric for each work as mentioned in the current curriculum and made final reports of students' progress during the pandemic.*

Listening to the sharing of Sushil's idea became even more critical as teachers had to rethink how they supported students, especially with distance learning, evaluation, and regular routines. Keeping individual records allowed teachers to track each student's progress, give personalized feedback, and offer support when needed. It was a way to ensure students didn't fall behind, even when learning looked very different. Kusuma et al. (2021) add that personalized records help students see where they stand compared to their learning goals and show them what steps to take next. Lam (2019) points out that these records also help students think about their learning by allowing them to track progress and act on specific feedback. Altogether, maintaining individual records makes portfolio assessment more effective and supports students in understanding and improving their learning. The theoretical

orientations of social constructivism and its aspects, including ZPD, Dialectic Process, and Mediation, guided me to advocate for the timely adaptation of a portfolio-based assessment, as it supports better teaching and learning. In this support, Vygotsky (1978) highlighted that when we go with a systematic design of portfolios, it not only collects student work but also helps to explore the hidden talents of students so that a teacher can guide their students accordingly. Continuing the discourse, Sarita also shared:

> *During the pandemic, I had to adapt my teaching and assessment practices significantly to maintain portfolio-based assessments. With limited access to digital devices among students, I used my personal laptop to prepare and email materials for printing and distribution at school. I provided printed assignments for those without technology, which parents collected and returned. To stay connected, I created messenger groups for parents and students, using them to assign tasks, check student work, and give feedback. However, challenges arose, particularly for economically disadvantaged students, making consistent participation and record-keeping difficult. Despite these obstacles, the situation taught me flexibility and adaptability, fostered greater parental involvement, and led to noticeable improvements in some students who were more engaged in learning at home.*

The pandemic reinforced the need for continuous professional development, encouraging Sarita to explore new teaching techniques and technologies that could enhance her portfolio assessment practices. This experience enriched her teaching toolkit and highlighted the vital role of adaptability in education during challenging times. Based on the above discussion, I realized that the concern of my participants indicates a positive aspect of the implementation of PBA in the educational route of the nation. In this support, Normayanti et al. (2020) stated that the insights from Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita highlight the crucial role of systematic portfolio documentation in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes, which is directly linked with the theoretical orientation of social constructivism proposed by Vygotsky (1978). This theory advocates that using digital tools, making rubrics, and bringing flexibility to teaching help teachers adjust to any situation. Every participant of mine used unique strategies for assessing their students during the pandemic; they mostly emphasized the different aspects of using portfolios in their context.

Talking about understanding documentation of records and pandemic adjustment of learners' progress shared by Sushil emphasizes maintaining detailed records and utilizing digital tools for meticulous portfolio organization, which aligns with the findings of Wolf and Dietiker (2018), who stress the importance of structured digital portfolio systems in showcasing student progress. Similarly, Preeti's use of unpaid software and portfolio books to systematize student work emphasizes accessibility and systematic arrangement, echoing literature advocating for accessible technology to support effective portfolio creation. Sarita's experience in documenting diverse assessments and projects to offer personalized instruction further supports the transformative potential of portfolios in providing a holistic view of student learning. Barrett and Kensinger (2011) supports Sarita's practice by highlighting that it demonstrates the value of portfolios in enabling tailored educational support and fostering reflective learning.

In the above discussion, the dialectic process highlights collaboration and communication, as seen during the pandemic when Preeti used messenger groups to maintain connections between teachers, students, and parents, enabling shared understanding despite technological challenges. This aligns with Vygotsky's view that dialogue is essential for negotiating meaning. The role of Mediation was evident in the use of digital tools like unpaid software, rubrics, and portfolio books, which helped organize student work systematically, making learning visible and accessible. These tools, emphasized by Preeti and Sushil, acted as bridges for understanding and improvement. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was reflected in Sarita's adaptive use of portfolios to document diverse assessments and provide personalized guidance, supporting students as they moved from dependent to independent learning. These practices underscore Vygotsky's principles, showing how portfolios foster collaboration, scaffolded learning, and reflective engagement, even amidst challenges like the pandemic.

Figure 3

Portfolio Assessment Conceptualised During Pandemic

Thus, the discussion could draw various interpretations as conceptualized Portfolio assessment during the pandemic, as presented in Figure No. 3. Digital portfolios became an important tool, highlighting both benefits and challenges. Accessibility for students, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, remains a significant hunger as many lack digital devices. However, digital portfolios brought parents and teachers closer, allowing them to share updates and assessments. Through this process, teachers had to be flexible and creative, support all students, even with limited resources, and learn valuable lessons adapting to challenges.

Portfolio Assessment for Holistic Evaluation

As the concept of PBA seems progressive and innovative, it has become a part of teaching and leading progress worldwide. Supporting the line, Shrestha (2019) stated that portfolio-based assessment provides a holistic view of a student's performance over time, capturing various aspects of their learning process and outcomes. Researchers have consistently shown that effective homework can enhance students' comprehension of materials, promote good study habits, and reinforce learning outcomes (Bhandari & Mishra, 2024). However, it would not be enough to claim such a heavy argument without evidence. For this support, I decided to explore the experiences of my participants. While receiving teachers' experiences, I asked Sushil to share how PBA supports students' learning. He stated:

> *Um… I mostly use students' portfolios as an alternative tool for assessment. I have experienced it as one of the supportive tools because it helps us know details about students, such as participation activities that include learning engagement in four skills. Maintaining individual records emerged as a crucial aspect, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach to assessment.*

Sushil has emphasized the importance of showcasing students' best work and curating a collection of exemplary assignments and projects to highlight their achievements and growth. This sharing is aligned with ZPD because it advocates knowing students in detail so that we can guide them (Vygotsky, 1978). The primary purpose of a portfolio, as articulated by Sushil:

Yes, I know students' portfolios serve as a comprehensive record that informs teachers, parents, and students about the student's academic journey. It provides a holistic view of students' performance over time, capturing various aspects of their learning process and outcomes.

The above regiment can be linked with the findings of Bhandari and Mishra (2024), who emphasize that well-designed home assignments contribute significantly to students' academic success by enhancing comprehension, fostering good study habits, and reinforcing learning. By maintaining individual records of these assignments, educators can effectively showcase students' best work, creating a curated collection highlighting their achievements and growth. This comprehensive assessment approach informs stakeholders about students' progress and cultivates a sense of responsibility and time management, reinforcing the importance of a structured and meaningful academic journey. According to Sushil:

One of the key advantages of using portfolios is the ability to conduct a holistic assessment of a student's abilities. Traditional assessments often focus solely on academic performance through tests and exams. However, portfolios allow for the inclusion of different types of work, including creative projects, group work, and personal reflections. This provides a more rounded view of the student's capabilities and achievements.

Listening to Sushil's story, I have drawn the key insight that the portfolio-based assessment process has a lot of space for teachers to guide their students in their learning process. Supporting Sushil's perspective, Paulson et al. (1991) argue that portfolios are a powerful tool for documenting student growth and achievement over time. They state that portfolios provide a means to showcase a wide range of student work, offering a more holistic view of student performance than traditional assessments. Vygotsky (1978) stated that portfolios can include various forms of student work, such as written assignments, projects, and reflective pieces, which collectively demonstrate the student's progress and development.

Going for the next participant, I also asked Preeti how she perceives her portfolio-based teaching in her classroom. Preeti views a portfolio as a record that includes various elements such as homework, exams, personality traits, and discipline. It is a multifaceted tool that captures academic achievements and personal and behavioral development. As well as Preeti responded:

There are many issues in the teaching field, especially when I have experienced that only homework, exams, personality, and discipline are considered, and regular records are kept. Whatever the child has done to learn is the document that we will keep on record.

Based on Preeti's sharing, portfolio-making is limited to homework; exams, personality, and discipline are considered, and regular records are kept. Barrett (2007) supports Preeti's view by emphasizing that e-portfolios effectively capture a comprehensive range of student learning and development. Barrett highlights that e-portfolios allow students to collect and reflect on their work, encompassing academic, personal, and behavioral achievements. This multifaceted approach provides a broader perspective on student development, aligning with Preeti's emphasis on personality traits and discipline in the assessment process (Barrett, 2007). This alignment ensures that portfolios become a supportive tool that enhances educational objectives rather than adding unnecessary workload. Preeti's approach underscores the importance of making portfolio activities meaningful and directly applicable to curriculum objectives; thus, improving student engagement and learning outcomes can also be used with a social constructivist approach.

In the same way, Sarita's purpose for the portfolio includes various student work and achievements, which adds to the long-term evaluation of progress. It allows teachers to see students' skills and knowledge development over time and provides a tangible record of their learning journey. She describes:

A portfolio is a comprehensive documentation tool in which I add the students' participation in classwork and activities that include listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also includes the internal work that is evaluated through a rubric. It is a repository that includes all the significant work a student has done throughout the year, covering various activities and achievements.

Sharing Sarita reveals that a portfolio-based assessment makes assessment systematics so that teachers record their students' progress and provide them with a wide range of alternative activities for their improvement. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) support the idea that portfolios enable educators to evaluate not only the final product but also the process of learning. Sarita shared how keeping a comprehensive record of students' progress is essential. This includes documenting

their participation in classwork, activities, and skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also covers internal work, which is evaluated using rubrics. This approach aligns with the guidelines of internal assessments from CDC (2021b), giving teachers a clear picture of a student's overall achievements in one file. It allows teachers to track students' development, providing valuable insights into their learning journey. The literature emphasizes that portfolios can include evidence of critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and personal growth, thus offering a well-rounded assessment of student capabilities. These findings align with Sarita's view that portfolios are a comprehensive documentation tool, capturing a wide range of activities and achievements.

From the above discussion, I understand that the perspectives of Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita collectively underscore the value of portfolios in facilitating a holistic assessment of students, which can be linked with Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky (1978). Sushil highlights portfolios as a tool for showcasing students' best work and involving parents in their academic progress, promoting collaborative learning. At the same time, Preeti's focus on integrating diverse tools, such as e-portfolios and records, to systematically document student progress aligns with Vygotsky's view that cultural tools and artifacts play a critical role in bridging learning gaps. Similarly, The ZPD is reflected in Sarita's approach of using portfolios to provide comprehensive documentation and feedback, supporting students' progression from guided to independent learning. These practices demonstrate how portfolios facilitate reflective, collaborative, and scaffolded learning experiences, offering a holistic view of students' growth and capabilities.

Figure 4

Portfolio-based Assessment for Holistic Evaluation

an alternative tool for assessment: to know details about students → a comprehensive approach: assess learning engagements → holistic assessment: capabilities and achievements

Thus, the discussion could lead to different interpretations of portfolio documentation; as presented in Figure 4 highlights, portfolios help teachers gather detailed information about students, including their participation and engagement in various activities. They offer a comprehensive approach to evaluating learning by capturing students' progress across listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and internal tasks assessed through rubrics.

Unlike traditional assessments focusing solely on exams and homework, portfolios provide a holistic view of student capabilities and achievements. They document various activities, creative projects, group work, and personal reflections, giving teachers, parents, and students a complete picture of students' academic journey and growth over time. Also, this method not only highlights academic performance but also emphasizes participation and learning engagements, making assessment more inclusive and meaningful.

Portfolio-based Assessment for Continuous Feedback and Reflection

Portfolio-based assessment is a powerful mechanism for fostering continuous feedback and reflection in the learning process. This approach encourages students to collect and organize their work over time, enabling educators and learners to engage in ongoing dialogue about progress and areas for improvement. As highlighted by Arter and Spandel (1992), portfolios provide a structured format for students to reflect on their learning experiences, allowing them to identify strengths and weaknesses in their skills and understanding. Additionally, Gulikers et al. (2004) emphasize that portfolio assessments promote a deeper level of engagement, requiring students to take an active role in their learning and self-evaluation. This continuous interaction enhances the feedback loop between teachers and students and cultivates a growth mindset among learners as they regularly assess their progress and set goals for future learning. Thus, portfolio-based assessment is an effective strategy for encouraging reflective practices that improve student outcomes (Klenowski, 2002). From this, portfolio-based assessment helps students and teachers to reflect on their learning and improve their mistakes. Sushil emphasized:

> *Portfolios are important for me to track and understand each student's progress. When I keep detailed records, I can offer more personalized feedback. This keeps parents informed and allows students to reflect on their learning and take advantage of their growth. As students add work to their*

portfolios, I can provide continuous feedback rather than waiting for end-of-term assessments, which helps them improve steadily. This process encourages them to reflect on their work and actively participate in learning. The portfolio reveals their development, helping me identify patterns, areas needing extra support, and each student's overall progress..

The above sharing of Sushil reveals that making a portfolio has much to do with the field assessment. It makes students self-corrective, responsible, self-motivated, and ready to receive feedback. In this support, Smith (2020) emphasized that portfolios enhance student learning by promoting self-assessment and continuous improvement. Similarly, Sushil shared a similar view, highlighting how portfolios are invaluable for tracking student progress, providing customized feedback, and encouraging self-reflection. This approach keeps parents involved and empowers students to take charge of their learning journey. The literature further supports this idea, showing that portfolios play a significant role in fostering self-assessment and continuous improvement. Using portfolios, we create an educational environment that supports students' growth meaningfully and engagingly. Social constructivist theory and its three aspects can be linked with the above sharing. I also put the same question to Preeti and she narrated:

Implementing portfolio-based assessment fosters student engagement and self-awareness. By involving students in self-assessment and providing constructive feedback, I empower them to take ownership of their learning journey. Then, the students engage actively in the assessment process, cultivating a sense of responsibility and accountability towards their academic progress.

Based on the above sharing, a portfolio-based assessment offers a learning space for improving the practices as advocated in the dialectical approach of Vygotsky (1978) in his theory of socio-constructivism. This method motivates students and enhances their critical thinking and self-evaluation skills. Brown (2019) supports this approach, highlighting that portfolio-based assessments encourage students to actively learn, improving their overall academic performance and self-regulation abilities. Sarita replies:

Instead of being based on lesson-like activities done by children, I now give project work to them based on day-to-day life. Every Friday, I keep the record.

I make them assess. I consider them to be like that to test how much vocabulary they can learn within a week or how much word meaning they can learn. Every Friday, I do activities, get involved, and document them. I give feedback, and the children get very excited and get a positive response, until now.

Sarita has highlighted that PBA transforms the classroom experience by integrating practical, real-life tasks that students find meaningful and engaging. Her sharing has also emphasized a real-world application that enhances vocabulary acquisition and boosts student enthusiasm and participation. Supporting Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita, project-based learning strategies effectively make educational content more relevant and stimulating for students, fostering a more dynamic and interactive learning environment (Johnson, 2021).

From the above discussion, I understood that the insights from Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita collectively highlight the transformative impact of portfolio-based assessment on student learning and engagement. Sushil emphasizes the necessity of portfolios for tracking and understanding student progress, noting that detailed records allow for personalized feedback and continuous improvement, supported by research indicating the benefits of self-assessment and reflective learning (Smith, 2020). Preeti underscores the role of portfolios in fostering student engagement and self-awareness, emphasizing that involving students in self-assessment and providing constructive feedback cultivates a sense of responsibility and accountability, enhancing critical thinking and self-evaluation skills (Brown, 2019). Similarly, Sarita illustrates the effectiveness of integrating practical, real-life tasks into the curriculum through project-based learning, making educational content more relevant and boosting student enthusiasm and participation (Johnson, 2021). Together, these perspectives demonstrate that portfolio-based assessment is a powerful tool for promoting active learning, personal growth, and meaningful engagement in the educational process.

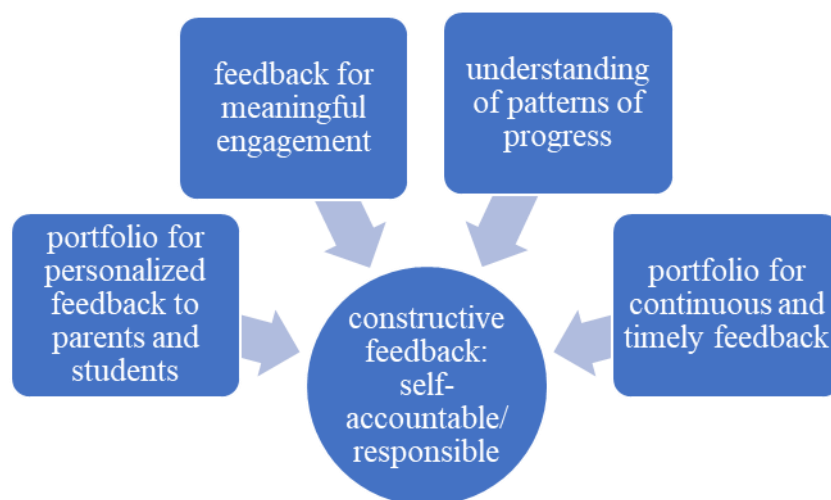In the PBA Continuous Feedback and Reflection theme, the discussion of the Dialectic Process involves collaborative feedback and reflection, as seen in Sushil's emphasis on using portfolios to engage students, parents, and teachers in ongoing dialogue about progress and areas for improvement. This aligns with Vygotsky's idea that interaction deepens understanding. Another is mediation, which is evident in

Sarita's integration of project-based, real-life tasks and vocabulary-building activities, which are practical tools to make learning meaningful and engaging. These tools bridge gaps in understanding, supporting Vygotsky's belief in culturally relevant artifacts for learning. Lastly, the ZPD theory also aligns with and is reflected in Preeti's focus on involving students in self-assessment and constructive feedback, enabling them to take ownership of their learning journey while progressing from guided to independent learning. These practices illustrate how portfolio-based assessment leverages SCT principles to create a reflective, interactive, student-centered learning environment that fosters growth and engagement.

Thus, the discussion could draw a different understanding of portfolio-based assessment for continuous feedback and reflection, as presented in Figure 5. A Portfolio is a valuable tool for providing personalized feedback to parents and students, fostering meaningful engagement, and ensuring continuous growth. By documenting students' work over time, portfolios reveal patterns of progress and highlight areas needing support, enabling tailored teaching strategies. Regular and timely feedback keeps students involved, encouraging reflection, deeper learning, and stable improvement.

Figure 5

Portfolio-based Assessment for Continuous Feedback and Reflection

This process creates a communication bridge among teachers, parents, and students and cultivates a sense of responsibility and accountability in students, making learning a continuous and holistic journey.

Portfolio-based Assessment for Involving Parents/Guardians

Portfolio-based assessment is an effective tool for involving parents and guardians in the educational process, fostering a collaborative environment for student learning. This approach documents student progress and engages families in meaningful discussions about their children's achievements and areas for growth. As noted by Harris and Goodall (2008), involving parents in the assessment process enhances their understanding of educational expectations and encourages them to support their children's learning at home. Furthermore, portfolios provide a tangible means for parents to witness their child's development over time, creating opportunities for reflection and dialogue about academic and personal milestones (Epstein, 2011). Educators can strengthen home-school partnerships by including parents in the assessment conversation, ultimately improving student motivation and success (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005). This collaborative effort empowers parents and fosters a sense of accountability and support for students as they see their families actively engaged in their educational journey.

Parents and guardians can be more involved in their child's education by maintaining portfolios. They can see firsthand what their child is working on, understand their progress, and support their learning journey at home. This involvement is crucial in creating a supportive learning environment at school and home. The primary purpose of a portfolio, as articulated by Sushil:

> *I have experienced a comprehensive record that informs teachers, parents, and students about the student's academic journey. To improve, parents and guardians should play a more active role by regularly reviewing the portfolio, discussing it with their child, and providing additional support where needed.*

The above sharing of Sunil indicates that collecting student portfolios helps improve students. Therefore, parents and guardians should play a more active role by regularly reviewing the portfolio, discussing it with their child, and providing additional support where needed (Shrestha, 2019). The three participants mentioned regularly calling parents to discuss their child's academic progress and other soft skills.

Preeti stated, "*Communicating with parents about portfolio-based assessment fosters understanding and support. However, bridging the gap between educational practices and parental expectations remains an ongoing endeavor.*" She added that
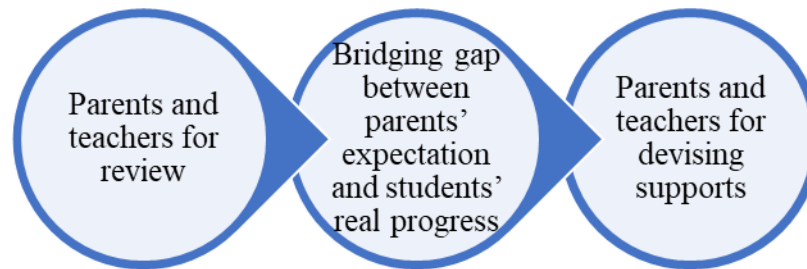
educators recognize the importance of parental involvement in supporting students' academic journeys and advocate for increased awareness and collaboration. Brown (2019) supports this by highlighting that effective communication between teachers and parents can significantly enhance student learning outcomes.

Similarly, Sarita emphasized the importance of collaboration and communication among stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and school administrators. "*Parents need to be actively engaged in their child's education, understanding the purpose and benefits of portfolio assessment and supporting their child's learning at home.*" According to Johnson (2021), such active engagement from parents can significantly enhance the effectiveness of portfolio assessments, as it creates a more cohesive and supportive learning environment.

Based on the above discussion, I found that the involvement of parents and guardians in the portfolio assessment process is vital for enhancing student learning and progress. Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita highlighted the need for regular communication with parents to keep them informed and involved. This collaborative approach ensures that parents understand the purpose and benefits of portfolio assessments, leading to better support for their child's education at home. By fostering an environment of continuous feedback and engagement, educators can bridge the gap between school and home, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes and holistic development for students.

Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (SCT) emphasizes the role of social interaction (Dialectic Process), mediation, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in facilitating learning. The Dialectic Process is reflected in the active involvement of parents, as seen in Sushil's, Preeti's, and Sarita's experiences, where regular communication between teachers and parents fosters collaborative discussions on student progress, helping to align home and school efforts. This interaction supports Vygotsky's notion that knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue. Mediation is evident in using portfolios, which serve as tools that bridge the gap between the teacher's assessment and the parents' understanding of their child's development. Portfolios allow parents to engage with students' academic and personal growth, offering a tangible way to mediate the learning process at home. The ZPD is reflected in how parents, by actively reviewing and discussing portfolios, can support their child's development beyond their current abilities, enabling them to grow with

guided assistance. These findings align with Vygotsky's ideas by highlighting how portfolio-based assessments create a collaborative, scaffolded learning environment where teachers and parents contribute to students' academic and personal growth.

Figure 6

Parents-Teachers Involvement Through Portfolios

Thus, figure 6 emphasizes the role of portfolio-based assessment in fostering collaboration between parents and teachers. It highlights the three key aspects of reviewing the student's progress, bridging the gap between parental expectations and actual performance, and jointly devising strategies to provide necessary support. Maintaining comprehensive records that inform all stakeholders about the student's academic journey is important. Active parental involvement through regular reviewing portfolios, discussion, and support at home can enhance this method's effectiveness. PBA builds understanding and partnership, and aligning parental expectations with educational practices remains a crucial and ongoing challenge.

Connecting Curriculum Alignment in Portfolio

Connecting curriculum alignment with portfolio-based assessment is crucial for ensuring that educational practices are coherent and focused on achieving specific learning outcomes. Portfolios serve as a tool that integrates curriculum objectives with student assessment, allowing educators to systematically document and reflect on student progress concerning the established standards. As Stiggins (2005) noted, practical portfolio assessments enable teachers to align their instructional strategies with curriculum goals, fostering a more targeted approach to student learning. Additionally, Chappuis (2005) highlights that aligning portfolios with curriculum frameworks enhances the relevance of the learning experience, encouraging students to engage more deeply with the material. Similarly, Harris and Roy (2007) claimed

that by utilizing portfolios to connect curriculum alignment, educators could create a structured pathway for students to demonstrate their understanding and mastery of the curriculum, facilitating ongoing feedback and reflection that ultimately supports student achievement. Sushil narrated:

> *Curriculum content, instructional strategies, assessments, and learning outcomes are aligned and work harmoniously together. I noted that the examination system focused solely on determining student scores, but recent changes allocate 40 marks for internal assessments, including participation and various activities. Teachers face challenges balancing teaching and evaluation within a 45-minute class. While the curriculum trusts teachers and views this as progress, successful portfolio implementation requires more than training and continuous support.*

From Sushil's above sharing, I found he highlighted the importance of curriculum alignment in portfolio-based assessments, emphasizing that curriculum content, instructional strategies, and assessments must work together to achieve learning outcomes. (Shepard, 1989), From their study, he asserts that implementing portfolios successfully, as well as continuous support and professional development, are essential to helping teachers integrate assessment practices into their instructional strategies. He noted that while integrating internal assessments (e.g., participation and activities) into the evaluation system marks progress, the limited timeframe of a 45-minute class poses challenges for teachers to balance teaching and evaluation effectively. This observation aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the role of the teacher as a facilitator in scaffolding learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Similarly, Preeti highlighted:

> The curriculum now aligns portfolio-based assessment with internal evaluations, assigning 40 marks to tasks covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing, all guided by rubrics. Students maintain separate homework and portfolio copies, with the letter documenting their best work and teacher feedback. This system encourages self-assessment, regular updates, and peer comparison, fostering awareness of their learning progress.

Preeti's response highlights the alignment of portfolio-based assessments with the curriculum, particularly through allocating 40 marks for tasks covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing, all structured by rubrics. This approach integrates

formative assessment principles, encouraging students to document their best work and reflect on teacher feedback in dedicated portfolio copies. By promoting self-assessment, regular updates, and peer comparison, the system fosters metacognitive awareness and ownership of learning progress. Panadero and Broadbent (2018) stated the role of rubric and self-assessment in deepening student engagement and improving outcomes. This aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, underscoring the importance of active participation and scaffolding in learning. Portfolios serve as tools for collaborative learning and reflection, enabling students to operate within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) through teacher guidance and peer interaction. Sarita acknowledges:

> *The practical challenges of implementing portfolio assessment within resource-constrained environments. Despite these challenges, I describe a structured approach where portfolios are integrated into weekly assessments and contribute to internal and external evaluation criteria. Sarita's perspective highlights the need for strategic planning and adaptation to ensure portfolio practices align with curriculum requirements while effectively supporting student learning and assessment needs.*

The above sharing of Sarita highlights the challenges of implementing portfolio assessment in resource-constrained environments while emphasizing its potential as a structured tool for aligning curriculum, assessments, and learning outcomes. Aligning portfolio assessments with curriculum goals ensures that instructional practices are coherent and purposeful, leading to a more targeted approach to student learning, as Stiggins (2005) emphasized. By integrating portfolios into weekly evaluations and linking them to internal and external criteria, Sarita demonstrates how strategic planning and adaptation can bridge the gap between theoretical curriculum goals and practical application. This aligns with Vygotsky's socio-constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding and collaborative learning in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). When aligned with curriculum requirements, portfolios provide a scaffolded framework that allows students to engage actively in their learning, reflect on their progress, and benefit from teacher feedback and peer interaction. As Vygotsky's theory suggests, this approach addresses students' cognitive development and supports their socio-emotional growth by fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration in learning.

Moreover, the structured use of portfolios ensures that assessment practices remain formative, focusing on skill development and continuous improvement in alignment with curriculum goals (Ministry of Education, 2015). It suggests that using portfolios systematically is a part of the current curriculum, as the recent curriculum has provided paces for portfolio-based assessment.

The insights from Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita underscore the importance of curriculum alignment in portfolio assessment practices. Sushil's perspective supports that curriculum alignment involves integrating assessments and ensuring they support broader educational goals. This approach enables a more comprehensive evaluation of student learning beyond traditional testing methods. However, resource constraints and implementation issues require continuous professional development and institutional support to successfully integrate and implement portfolio assessments in educational settings.

From a social constructivist perspective, particularly Vygotsky's (1978) approach, aligning curriculum with portfolio-based assessment is essential for fostering collaborative and meaningful learning experiences that help students engage deeply with educational objectives. Central to this alignment is Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which focuses on the gap between what a student can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. Through portfolio-based assessment aligned with curriculum goals, educators provide structured support, scaffolding students' learning within their ZPD and offering ongoing feedback and reflection that promotes mastery. Stiggins (2005) suggests that this alignment of assessment with curriculum objectives enables educators to target instructional strategies more effectively, while Harris and Roy (2007) emphasize how such integration enhances the relevance of learning, encouraging deeper student engagement as they build knowledge meaningfully. Insights from Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita further underscore the importance of this approach. Sushil's focus on integrated internal assessments reflects Vygotsky's view of social interaction and scaffolding as critical to learning. At the same time, Preeti's emphasis on aligning portfolio tasks directly with curriculum objectives and Sarita's structured portfolio integration, even under resource constraints, highlights the adaptability required to meet students' needs. This alignment supports effective assessment and promotes a learning environment where students construct knowledge with meaningful guidance,

illustrating how curriculum-connected portfolios can effectively drive student progress and engagement.

Figure 7

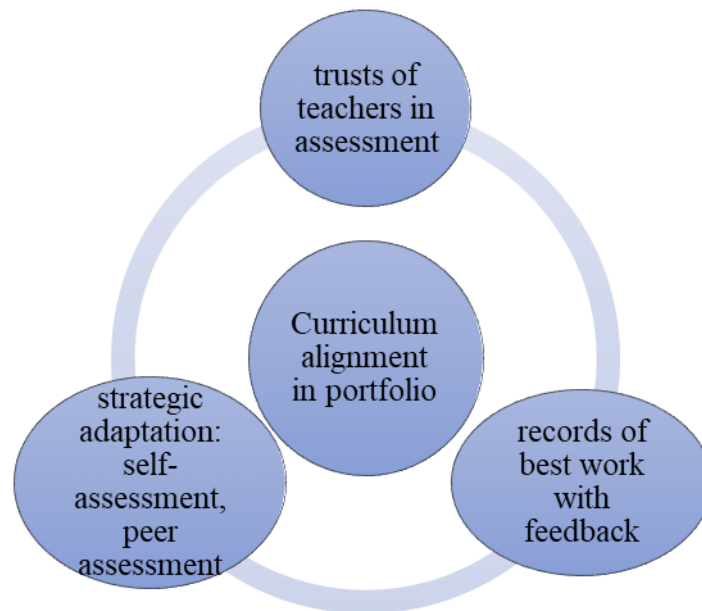*Curriculum Alignment and Portfolio-based Assessment*

Figure no. 7 illustrates an effective portfolio system's essential components that emphasize its alignment with the curriculum. The curriculum alignment ensures that the portfolio reflects the intended learning goals and outcomes. These surroundings are three interconnected elements: teachers' trust in the assessment process, which reinforces the credibility and reliability of portfolios; the attachment of students' best work with feedback showcasing achievements and areas for improvement. Strategic adaptations like self-assessment and peer assessment empower students' ownership of their learning. These elements foster a balanced, reflective, and growth-oriented education method.

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Self-Assessment and Student Involvement

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Self-assessment and student involvement are integral components of portfolio-based assessment, empowering learners to take an active role in their educational journey. By engaging in self-assessment, students reflect on their learning progress, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and set personal goals for improvement. According to Boud (1995), self-assessment fosters a deeper understanding of the learning process, as it encourages students to evaluate their own work critically and to take responsibility for their learning outcomes. Furthermore, McMillan and Hearn

(2008) emphasize that involving students in self-assessment enhances their motivation and engagement as they become more invested in their learning. This active participation promotes self-regulation and cultivates essential skills such as critical thinking and reflective practice, ultimately leading to improved academic performance (Paris & Paris, 2001). Thus, integrating self-assessment within portfolio-based assessment frameworks supports student involvement and contributes significantly to developing independent, motivated learners. Sarita shared her understanding:

> *Self-assessment is crucial for students as it fosters a sense of ownership over their learning. When students actively evaluate their work, they become more aware of their strengths and areas for improvement. This reflection helps them set personal learning goals and motivates them to take responsibility for their progress. In my classroom, I encourage students to read their portfolios regularly, discuss their findings, and reflect on their growth. Moreover, the involvement of parents is equally important. They should be curious about their child's learning journey and regularly communicate with teachers to understand how their child is performing. When parents are engaged, it creates a supportive environment that reinforces the value of self-assessment. They can assist their children in identifying challenges and celebrating achievements, making the learning process more collaborative and enriching. This partnership between teachers, students, and parents enhances the overall effectiveness of portfolio-based assessments and promotes a culture of continuous improvement in learning.*

Sarita highlighted that self-assessment is a key element in students' learning, enabling them to take ownership of their progress. She noted that self-assessment helps students identify their strengths and areas for improvement, encouraging them to set personal goals and take responsibility for their learning journey. Supporting this perspective, Paris and Paris (2001) claimed that regularly reviewing portfolios allows students to reflect on their achievements and set meaningful goals for future improvement. Sarita also highlighted the critical role of parental involvement, stating that engaged parents who communicate with teachers and celebrate the child's accomplishments help reinforce the value of portfolios. The collaborative approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivist Theory, which stresses the

importance of interaction among teachers, parents, and students to foster continuous improvement and a supportive learning environment. Similarly, Sushil responded:

> *In the context of the English subject, students engage in self-assessment to gauge their progress in listening, speaking, homework, project work, classwork, and class participation, maintaining portfolios in these areas. It helps identify any challenges they face, whether self-imposed or with external assistance, allowing students to recognize areas for improvement.*

Sushil underlined the role of self-assessment in the context of English language learning. He explained that students use portfolios to track their progress in listening, speaking, project work, and class participation, which helps them identify challenges and recognize areas for growth. Vygotsky (1978) viewed self-assessment as a vital mediating process, encouraging students to reflect on their learning and take ownership of their development. By engaging in self-assessment, students actively participate in their learning, aligning with the ZPD, where scaffolding from teachers or peers enables them to achieve higher levels of competence. This practice also fosters a growth mindset, as students learn to see challenges as opportunities to improve rather than obstacles to success.

Portfolio-based assessment also serves as a diagnostic tool for identifying areas requiring additional support for students and teachers. Barrett (2007) highlighted that portfolios offer a comprehensive view of student progress, capturing strengths and weaknesses. Preeti also highlighted:

> *I focus on the need for diverse materials and activities, which underscores the importance of providing students with various learning experiences. For learning English, that includes resources for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.*

Preeti emphasized the importance of incorporating diverse materials and activities, particularly in English language learning, to provide students with varied opportunities to showcase their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. *She noted, "Providing a wide range of resources ensures that portfolios reflect a more holistic picture of students' abilities and progress."* The participants' experience also defines portfolio-based assessment as improvement identification of learners. Students and teachers can identify challenges and areas for improvement by maintaining portfolios. This can involve recognizing difficulties in specific skills or

identifying the need for additional support. The portfolio is a diagnostic tool highlighting strengths and weaknesses (Barrett, 2007). Ensuring that portfolios capture a broad spectrum of student work helps create a more comprehensive picture of their abilities and progress. This approach enhances assessment quality and aligns with the social constructivist approach, which advocates for collaborative and reflective learning processes. The integration of portfolio-based assessment within educational practices serves multiple functions that enhance the learning experience for students while actively involving parents and guardians. Portfolios document student progress and foster meaningful interactions between educators and families, creating a supportive learning environment beyond the classroom. Epstein (2011) highlights the critical role of parental involvement in bolstering student motivation and academic success.

The participants highlight the transformative role of self-assessment in portfolio-based assessments, aligning closely with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (SCT), particularly in dialectic process, mediation, and ZPD. Sarita, Sushil, and Preeti emphasized the importance of self-reflection and student involvement, with Sarita noting that regular portfolio reviews help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering ownership of learning. This reflects Vygotsky's Dialectic Process, where continuous interaction and feedback from teachers and peers help students negotiate meaning and refine their understanding. Mediation is evident as teachers guide students through self-assessment, offering feedback and tools like portfolios to bridge the gap between current abilities and future learning goals. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is reflected in students' engagement with their portfolios to identify areas for improvement and set personal goals as they receive scaffolded support that gradually leads to greater autonomy. Thus, self-assessment fosters ownership of learning, enabling students to reflect on their progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and set personal learning goals by enhancing motivation and responsibility.

Complexities in Portfolio-based Assessment

While recognized for its ability to encourage deeper learning and reflection, portfolio-based assessment involves various challenges that can make its use complex and demanding. Unlike traditional assessments, portfolios require ongoing documentation and evaluation, requiring time, resources, and careful alignment with

curriculum goals to reflect student progress (Stiggins, 2005). Both students and teachers must actively participate in this process, which can be difficult to standardize and manage effectively (Chappuis, 2005). Additionally, as Harris and Roy (2007) note, ensuring consistency, fairness, and validity across diverse classrooms poses another difficulty, mainly when educational settings and resources vary widely. These complexities highlight the importance of targeted support and professional development for educators to successfully manage both the instructional and logistical aspects of portfolio-based assessment. With this academic support in mind, I also asked my participants to highlight how they have experienced the complexities while implementing the concept of portfolio-based assessment.

Adopting New System

Adapting to portfolio-based assessment presents a unique set of challenges, requiring educators and students to shift from traditional assessment methods to a more reflective and ongoing evaluation system. According to Chappuis (2005), this transition involves a change in assessment practices and a new mindset, where learning progress is documented continuously rather than captured in isolated tests. This complexity is amplified by the need to align portfolios with curriculum goals while managing the time and resources required for regular feedback and reflection (Stiggins, 2005). These demands highlight the necessity for adequate training and institutional support to navigate the complexities of implementing a portfolio-based assessment effectively. My participants have their understanding of this concern, and they share it differently.

Adapting to new curricula can be challenging, particularly when educators lack sufficient training and resources. Preeti expressed:

> *Initially, I struggled to implement portfolio-based assessments effectively. To address these challenges, I took proactive steps, such as exploring online resources like YouTube tutorials, unpaid software tools, and Google searches, and participating in online training sessions to familiarize myself with the nuances of portfolio assessment.*

She highlights curriculum changes by seeking resources and adapting her teaching practices accordingly. Her approach aligns with the importance of teacher adaptability and professional development, as highlighted by Stiggins (2005), who emphasizes the need for continuous learning and resourcefulness in implementing

innovative assessment methods. Preeti's experience underscores the significance of self-directed professional growth in overcoming the complexities of modern educational practices. González & Wagenaar (2019) suggest that teacher training and professional development are crucial for successful adaptation to new assessment methods, including portfolios.

Similarly, Sarita acknowledged the challenges of implementing portfolio assessment in a resource-constrained environment.

> *I noticed the major challenges that I encounter while using portfolios are that limited time, resources, and institutional support can pose significant barriers to effective implementation. It can be challenging to meet all curriculum objectives and adequately support each student, especially in large classes.*

Listening to Sarita's response, I traced key barriers to implementing portfolio-based assessment, which can be effectively analyzed from a sociocultural perspective. In this support, Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated the interconnectedness of individual development with external systems such as institutional and societal structures. Sarita's concerns about limited resources, time, and institutional backing align with Bronfenbrenner's notion that challenges within the microsystem (classroom) and exosystem (institutional support) significantly influence the learning environment and outcomes. From Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective, Sarita's challenges with portfolio-based assessment reflect systemic barriers that hinder effective learning and teaching. Vygotsky emphasizes the role of social context, institutional support, and mediated tools in facilitating education, which Sarita identifies as lacking. She mentions that the limited time, resources, and institutional backing undermine the collaborative scaffolding necessary for teachers and students to succeed. Without such support, educators struggle to address the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) for individual students, particularly in large classes where personalized guidance is difficult.

Additionally, the absence of sufficient resources prevents the use of mediating tools essential for bridging theoretical objectives and practical implementation. At the same time, institutional constraints impede collaborative efforts among educators to share strategies and best practices. Addressing these issues through enhanced support systems and resource allocation would align with Vygotsky's vision of learning as a

socially mediated process, enabling teachers to scaffold learning effectively and meet diverse student needs. In discussing the adoption of a new system, Sushil stated:

> *It is crucial to ensure that all stakeholders are adequately prepared and informed. This involves providing comprehensive training to teachers so they understand the new processes and tools at their disposal. A collaborative approach is vital; teachers should have opportunities to share their experiences and challenges with one another. This fosters a sense of community and enables us to identify best practices that can be shared across the board. However, the struggle to change can be a significant barrier. An open dialogue and ongoing support also ensure the successful adoption of a new system, which hinges on our collective commitment to learning and adapting together.*

The above sharing of Sushil indicates that teacher workload and time constraints are significant barriers to effective portfolio implementation. His sharing also emphasizes that successfully adopting a new system requires thorough preparation, collaborative learning, and ongoing stakeholder support to foster a shared commitment to change and improvement. In this support, López-Pastor et al. (2013) stated that teacher training and professional development are crucial for successful adaptation to new assessment methods, including portfolios. Vygotsky asserts that knowledge is constructed through interaction within a social context, and the emphasis on comprehensive training and a collaborative approach reflects the importance of scaffolding. By enabling teachers to share their experiences and challenges, Sushil advocates for a socially mediated learning process where peers act as co-constructors of knowledge. This aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept, as shared practices and dialogue help individuals move beyond their current abilities through collective problem-solving.

Based on the above discussion, portfolios are a powerful educational tool that provides a comprehensive view of a student's learning journey. The insights from Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita collectively offer a rich understanding of what portfolios entail and their significance in the educational process. By systematically collecting and documenting various types of work, portfolios facilitate a holistic assessment that captures the multifaceted nature of student learning, encompassing academic achievements, personal growth, and skill development. This assessment method

allows for continuous feedback, enabling students to reflect on their progress and take ownership of their learning. It also engages parents and guardians by providing them with a clear and ongoing picture of their child's academic journey, fostering a supportive home environment that complements school efforts. Aligning portfolios with the curriculum ensures that the assessment is relevant and enhances educational objectives, while integrating technology can streamline the process, making it more efficient and engaging. However, challenges such as time constraints and resource limitations must be addressed to realize the full potential of portfolio-based assessments. This requires ongoing professional development for teachers, support from school administrations, and a collaborative approach to overcome these barriers.

E-Portfolios and Resource Constraints

An e-portfolio is a digital collection of artifacts that showcase an individual's learning journey, achievements, and reflections over time. It is an innovative assessment and personal development tool, enabling learners to document their progress and demonstrate competencies in a structured and interactive format. The growing need for e-portfolios stems from their ability to promote self-directed learning, encourage reflective practices, and provide a comprehensive platform for formative and summative evaluations. In this regard, Barrett and Kensinger (2011) stated that e-portfolios support personalized learning and facilitate seamless technology integration into assessment practices, addressing the evolving demands of 21st-century skills (Barrett & Kensinger, 2011). Supporting the discourse, Sarita shared:

> *Effective e-portfolio implementation requires access to technological resources such as laptops, tablets, and appropriate software. The significant challenge is the lack of technological resources for effective portfolio management. Specifically, an e-portfolio includes hardware such as laptops and appropriate software for organizing and maintaining digital portfolios.* Similarly, Sushil shared*:*
>
> *I have experienced and observed portfolio-based assessments. The portfolio encompasses various aspects of student work and participation, including listening, speaking, homework, project work, classwork, and class participation. This comprehensive inclusion ensures a holistic view of students' abilities and progress.*

Preeti shared:

Preeti emphasizes the necessity of diverse materials and activities to support the development of various language skills. Consequently, these materials are crucial for effective teaching and learning in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. She focused on classroom engagement for students with diverse needs.

The above discussion about the challenges in implementing e-portfolios due to resource constraints underscores a critical issue. Effective e-portfolio implementation requires access to technological resources such as laptops, tablets, and appropriate software. Schools must invest in these resources to ensure all students have equal opportunities to digitally document and showcase their work (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; Selwyn, 2020). The three participants highlighted that having a dedicated domain for each student and teacher would allow for more efficient portfolio management, enabling assessments to be conducted anywhere. However, they also pointed out the significant limitation of insufficient storage space to accommodate the vast amount of data generated by individual files. This lack of capacity not only hampers the proper documentation of student progress but also creates disparities in access to these digital tools (OECD, 2020). Without adequate storage solutions, the potential benefits of e-portfolios, such as fostering continuous learning and providing comprehensive feedback, are severely restricted.

From the lens of Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, Preeti and Sarita's insights show the need for materials and technological resources as essential scaffolds for students' learning within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD represents the space between what a learner can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance, highlighting the importance of supportive tools and strategies for effective learning. Preeti's focus on diverse materials for language skills development in listening, speaking, reading, and writing aligns with Vygotsky's view that learning is socially mediated and enriched by engaging context-relevant resources. Similarly, Sarita's emphasis on the lack of technological support, such as laptops and digital tools, underscores a gap in essential scaffolding that hinders students' ability to engage meaningfully with portfolio-based assessments. As Chappuis (2005) and others have noted, robust technological resources and teacher training are critical for creating structured learning environments that foster growth,

making portfolios a more accessible and integrated tool in the educational process. Preeti and Sarita's perspectives illustrate the importance of resources for building an inclusive, technology-supported classroom where students can develop their skills with guided support.

Challenges in Documentation

While implementing portfolio-based assessment, effective documentation poses a significant challenge for educators and students. Shavelson et al. (1991) state that "the time-consuming nature of gathering and organizing evidence of student learning often detracts from actual teaching." Additionally, Sarita notes that "without adequate support and resources, maintaining thorough documentation can become overwhelming," leading to incomplete or inconsistent portfolios. This difficulty in documentation not only hampers the assessment process but can also affect students' ability to track their progress meaningfully, as highlighted by Dysthe and Engelsen (2011), who assert that effectively addressing challenges related to documentation is crucial to unlocking the full benefits and potential of portfolio-based assessments in education. Preeti shared:

> *We need materials and activities for English for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It's easy to document writing skills, but reading and speaking are harder to document. I document certain skills, particularly performance-based skills like speaking and reading, as significant challenges.*

Preeti highlights the difficulty in capturing these skills compared to more straightforward tasks like writing. Innovative solutions, such as audio and video recordings, can help document these skills more effectively. However, these methods require adequate technological resources and training. The absence of clear guidelines and sufficient teacher training exacerbates this problem, making it difficult to integrate portfolios into the curriculum effectively (Barrett, 2007). There, she faced Documentation Challenges; Preeti points out the difficulty in documenting skills like reading and speaking. While written work can be easily included in portfolios, capturing and assessing oral skills and reading comprehension requires more creative solutions and tools. Preeti highlights Technology Use. The use of social media platforms like Facebook for recording student activities is highlighted. Despite the potential of e-portfolios, they are not being utilized to their full potential. This

indicates a gap between available technological tools and their effective implementation.

Preeti's observation of the gap between theoretical recognition and practical application of portfolios points to a common issue in educational settings. While the concept of portfolios is widely accepted, their effective implementation often faces challenges, such as a lack of systematic procedures and adequate resources. This disconnect can lead to portfolios being used more as a formality rather than a tool for meaningful assessment and reflection (Smith & Tillema, 2003). Additionally, the time and effort required to manage and assess portfolios can overwhelm educators, especially without institutional support (Berrill & Addison, 2010). As a result, the potential benefits of portfolio-based assessments, such as fostering student self-reflection and showcasing a range of skills, are often underutilized. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to provide teachers with the necessary resources and training and establish a consistent framework for portfolio use across educational institutions.

Resource generation for portfolios is a complex process that entails collecting, organizing, and managing diverse types of student work and assessments. Participants such as Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita offer valuable insights into this process, emphasizing both the advantages and challenges of portfolio management. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they highlighted using platforms like Messenger to maintain communication with parents and students. However, they also noted that not everyone had access to the necessary devices, underscoring the importance of technological support in ensuring proper documentation.

Professional Development and Training

Professional development and training are vital for teachers who want to grow and keep up with new teaching methods. As education continues to evolve, so do the strategies and tools that can help teachers create better learning environments. However, finding the time and resources to attend relevant workshops or training sessions can be challenging. Often, even though the training may be useful, it may not always directly connect to what teachers face in their classrooms. Still, many educators recognize that professional growth is essential not just for their development but also for the benefit of their students. Preeti shared her thoughts on this, saying:

I have had discussions about the workshops and training I've attended.
They've helped improve our teaching practices, but some challenges exist.
Sometimes, the training doesn't directly apply to our classrooms, and it can be
hard to implement those strategies. Plus, time is always an issue, making it
tough to engage with the material fully. However, I still believe that ongoing
professional development is essential for our growth, and I always look for
ways to learn and improve.

From the above sharing, Preeti highlights that workshops and training improve teaching practices. Still, she highlights challenges such as a lack of relevance to classroom needs and time constraints, making implementation difficult. Despite these issues, she values ongoing professional development and remains committed to continuous learning and improvement. Her response reflects a proactive attitude toward overcoming obstacles in her professional growth. Here, Preeti's response reflects Vygotsky's principles of social interaction, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). She highlights the value of discussions during workshops and training, showcasing how knowledge is constructed through collaboration and shared experiences, aligning with Vygotsky's view that learning is a socially mediated process. These sessions act as scaffolding, offering external guidance to improve her teaching practices (Wood et al., 1976). However, Preeti identifies challenges such as the lack of direct applicability and time constraints, highlighting gaps in the support needed for effective learning within her ZPD.

Despite these challenges, Preeti's commitment to ongoing professional development reflects her active engagement with her ZPD, moving from external support to independent knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978). Her reflective approach aligns with Portfolio-Based Assessment, which encourages critical evaluation, self-improvement, and independent learning (Paulson et al., 1991). Ultimately, Preeti's response underscores the importance of meaningful interactions, scaffolding, and tailored support in fostering professional growth. Similarly, Sarita echoed this sentiment, saying:

To improve my teaching, I've actively looked for professional development
opportunities. Continuous learning is crucial for teachers to stay on top of the
latest teaching methods. I've been part of training programs focused on

portfolio-based assessment and integrated curricula. These experiences have given me the tools to try out new strategies in my classroom, and they've really worked. I also encourage my colleagues to keep up with their professional development because it helps us as teachers and improves our students' learning outcomes.

Sarita's response aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, particularly scaffolding and collaboration. Her participation in professional development, especially in portfolio-based assessment, reflects how external support helps learners apply new strategies within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). Wood et al. (1976) support this guided learning process, emphasizing the importance of structured guidance for effective learning. Sarita's success in implementing these strategies demonstrates Bruner's (1996) view that active engagement enhances learning. Additionally, her encouragement of colleagues aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) idea that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction, as also supported by Palincsar and Brown (1984). The above discussion highlights the role of professional development, collaboration, and scaffolding in improving teaching practices and student outcomes. Training teachers to effectively use e-portfolios, as underscored by Sarita, is essential for successful implementation. Professional development programs can equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage e-portfolios efficiently. Training should cover technical aspects, best practices in digital documentation, and strategies for integrating e-portfolios into the curriculum.

In the interview, Mr. Sushil discussed the importance of professional development and training for teachers. He said:
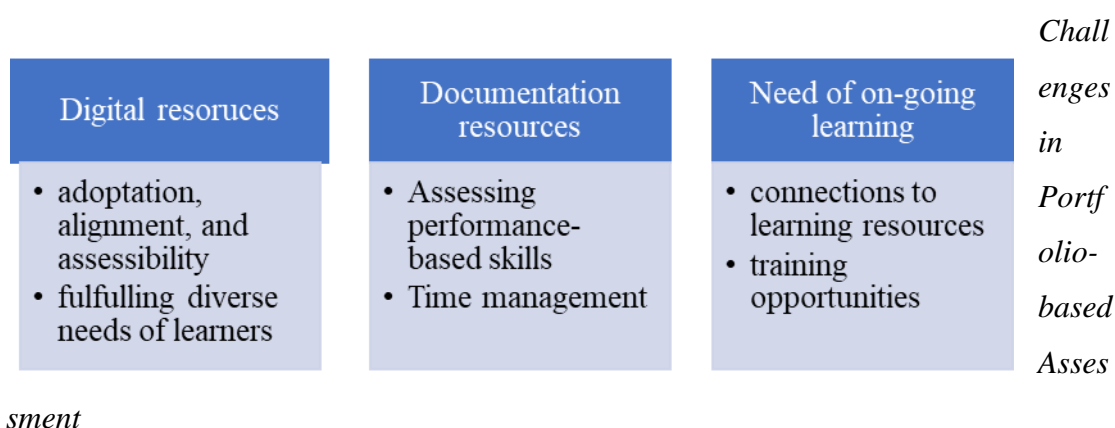
Continuous training is crucial for teachers to stay updated with the ever-changing educational landscape. Ongoing learning helps educators adapt to new teaching methods and effectively meet their students' needs. The professional development training should not be a one-time event, remarking. We need ongoing support and resources to implement effective teaching practices.

Sushil noted that collaboration among educators is crucial, saying, "*Working together allows us to share best practices and learn from each other's experiences.*" He also expressed concern about the current training programs, mentioning, *"Many of*

them do not align with our actual classroom needs, making it difficult to apply what we've learned." He advocated a more tailored approach, asserting, *"Professional development should be relevant, practical, and directly applicable to our teaching situations'.* Sushil highlighted the necessity of investing in teachers' growth: "*When teachers receive the right training and support, it ultimately benefits the students and the entire educational system."*

Supporting *literature* and theory highlight the importance of professional development for teachers. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), continuous professional development helps teachers improve their instructional practices, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes. The literature suggests that teachers who engage in ongoing learning are better equipped to adapt to new teaching methods. This aligns with Preeti's, Sushil's, and Sarita's views on the value of training and learning, which supports them in updating their teaching skills. In this support, Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978) agrees with the above notion, emphasizing the importance of ongoing, collaborative learning for teachers and integrating cultural tools (such as professional development) to improve practice. Vygotsky's theory also underlines that teachers, like students, benefit from shared learning experiences and that professional growth is a key component of fostering a supportive, evolving learning environment. The above discussion highlights the importance of professional development and training for teachers, emphasizing its benefits and challenges.

Figure 8

Challenges in Portfolio-based Assessment

Digital resorces	Documentation resources	Need of on-going learning
• adoptation, alignment, and assessibility • fulfulling diverse needs of learners	• Assessing performance-based skills • Time management	• connections to learning resources • training opportunities

Thus, figure 8 highlights the challenges in portfolio-based assessment by categorizing them into three key areas. Digital resources pose challenges related to

adoption, alignment, and accessibility while striving to meet the diverse needs of learners. Documentation resources require effective assessment of performance-based skills and effective time management to maintain detailed records.

Additionally, the need for ongoing learning emphasizes the importance of connecting to learning resources and providing training opportunities to support teachers and students in effectively implementing portfolio-based assessments. These challenges underline the complexity of integrating portfolios into the educational process.

Researcher's Reflection on the Understanding of Portfolio-based Assessment

The insights from participants significantly deepened my understanding of portfolio-based assessment (PBA) as both an evaluative tool and a reflective process that involves the complexities of authentic student assessment. Engaging with the experiences of Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita broadened my perspective on how portfolios, when used effectively, can offer a comprehensive view of student learning beyond traditional assessments. The emphasis on capturing student growth, skills, and reflections through various types of work class participation, projects, and oral activities showcased the depth of portfolios as a representation of the student's learning journey.

The participants' views illuminated the practical challenges often accompanying PBA implementation, including time constraints, resource limitations, and the need for consistent documentation methods. Their candid descriptions underscored that while portfolios hold great promise, their successful application requires institutional support and adequate resources. Particularly insightful were the shared struggles in adapting to new assessment practices without adequate training or infrastructure. This highlighted a critical aspect of portfolio-based assessment; it is not simply a pedagogical tool but a collaborative endeavor that necessitates ongoing professional development, technological access, and administrative commitment.

Reflecting on these perspectives, I increasingly agreed with balancing PBA's theoretical benefits with the practical needs of teachers and students. For instance, while portfolios encourage student autonomy and engage them in self-reflection, as noted by Sushil and Sarita, they can become an additional workload for teachers without proper support mechanisms. This insight reinforced my understanding that successful portfolio implementation requires a shift in assessment practices and

institutional priorities. Sushil's comments on the need for "collaboration and sharing of best practices" resonated, underscoring that portfolios work best in a supportive, community-oriented educational environment where teachers can share insights and strategies.

Moreover, the participants' discussions on the challenges of documenting performance-based skills, such as speaking and reading, expanded my appreciation for how technology can support PBA. However, Sarita's observations about resource constraints highlighted an equity issue that often accompanies digital assessments. This understanding deepened my recognition that while e-portfolios have the potential to streamline and enhance assessment, they also require schools to address resource disparities to ensure equal access and effective use.

Finally, this reflection has enhanced my recognition of portfolios not just as assessment tools but as instruments of transformation within the classroom, with the potential to make learning more dynamic, student-centered, and reflective. The participants' collective emphasis on the benefits of portfolio-based assessment that engages students in self-reflection, provides a holistic view of their growth, and fosters meaningful connections between school and home has reinforced my understanding of PBA's capacity to enrich the educational experience. Through their narratives, I now see portfolio-based assessment as a bridge that connects educational objectives, student engagement, and collaborative learning, ultimately benefiting all stakeholders in the learning process.

Thus, effective portfolio-based assessment goes beyond collection; it requires careful planning, structured training, technological resources, and a collaborative spirit. In reflecting on my research process, I am motivated to explore how such balanced methods can be encouraged and sustained in diverse educational contexts, i.e., in schools with varying resources, levels of technological access, and teaching practices, socio-cultural diversity, different linguistic background, intellectual diversity ensuring that PBA can fulfil its potential as a powerful tool for learning and assessment.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV explores the benefits and challenges of portfolio-based assessment (PBA) from the perspectives of English language teachers, highlighting how portfolios can provide a comprehensive view of student learning by documenting

academic achievements, personal growth, and skill development. Teachers recognize the potential of portfolios to foster continuous feedback, student reflection, and engagement. However, they also identified significant challenges, including the time required for feedback, resource limitations (especially for e-portfolios), and difficulties maintaining consistency. Adapting to portfolio-based assessments without adequate training was a common issue, underscoring the need for institutional support and professional development. Despite the hurdles, participants emphasized the importance of collaborative planning, resource access, and administrative support to ensure effective implementation. The chapter finally suggests that while portfolios can enrich the learning experience, realizing their full potential requires addressing practical challenges through strategic support and resources.

CHAPTER V

NARRATING TEACHERS' PRACTICES OF PORTFOLIO-BASED

ASSESSMENT

In this chapter, I present participants' narratives regarding their experiences with portfolio-based assessment as English language teachers. This chapter addresses the primary research question: How do English language teachers implement portfolio-based assessment in their practice? Since this study was conducted using a narrative inquiry approach, I recount the experiences shared by English language teachers during interviews. The practices are organized under various subheadings, following a narrative structure. Additionally, I incorporate the authentic voices of the English language teachers to provide context and convey their experiences effectively.

Through interviews with English language teachers, valuable insights were gathered about their everyday experiences, challenges, and successes. I explore the perspectives of these educators as they navigate the intricacies of teaching English language skills to diverse student groups, as shared through their own stories.

Technological Integration in Portfolio Management

Technology in portfolio management is increasingly vital in modern education, enabling teachers to streamline documentation and enhance assessment practices. Sushil shared, *"I use tools like Excel sheets to document* students' *progress, including project work and unit-wise tasks. In the classroom, I display these records on the smartboard to discuss achievements and areas for improvement.* Similarly, Preeti highlighted, *"I type materials at home, email them to the school, and print them for distribution. While this helps, having proper software would make documenting students' work much easier.* Schools can offer fairer options and better ways to track students' progress by fixing these tech issues, especially using e-portfolios and other digital tools. This study emphasizes that effective e-portfolio implementation requires devices, adequate software, teacher training, and policy support to address barriers such as workload and technology integration (Abrams, 2021; Delett et al., 2001; Hongyan & Wong, 2024). Therefore, investing in technology and training improves digital portfolio implementation and fosters fair and effective student evaluations.

Both teachers emphasize the benefits of technological tools but acknowledge the challenges of insufficient resources. Vygotsky's mediation theory aligns with their practices, as tools like laptops and digital platforms act as mediators that bridge the gap between teachers' objectives and students' learning needs. These tools enhance efficiency and provide a structured way to track and assess progress, reflecting the role of cultural artifacts in advancing education.
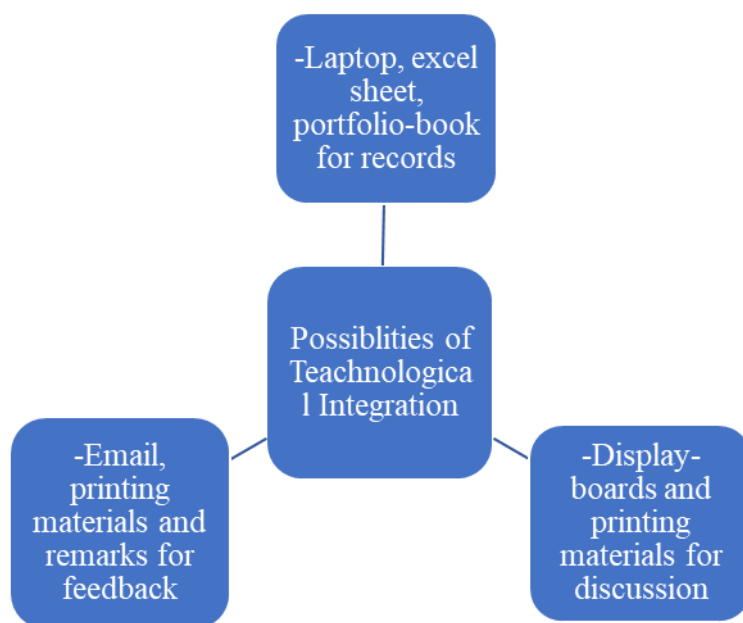
The dialectic teaching and learning process is evident in how technology facilitates interaction between teachers, students, and the learning environment. Sarita noted, *"Every Friday, I conduct activities and document results in an Excel sheet with remarks and feedback records. I give feedback based on the e-portfolio book that excites children and responds positively.* Research indicates that integrating technology in educational assessments, such as digital portfolios, enhances learning experiences and improves student outcomes (Hai-Jew, 2020). She also uses speaking tasks, such as asking students about their weekends, to assess their listening and speaking skills, adding, *"I assign levels based on rubrics, and students understand where they need to improve."* Sarita utilizes technology to distribute reading tasks and conduct self-assessment exercises among her students. She emails texts, uses digital resources for teaching, and employs rubrics that students are familiar with to track their progress. Sarita's integration of technology enables efficient distribution of learning materials and enhances student engagement through personalized learning experiences tailored to their needs. This interaction highlights Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where students move beyond their current abilities through guided tasks. Technology, such as email, smartboards, and rubrics, mediates this process by providing teachers with the means to offer timely feedback and scaffold student learning. Literature supports this, as Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) argue that digital tools can create opportunities for personalized learning and continuous improvement, making the ZPD accessible in diverse classroom settings.

However, the effective integration of technology requires systemic support. Sarita mentioned, "If we had software to document students' work, it would be much more effective. I use my laptop right now, but this isn't sustainable." Preeti also stressed the need for collaboration, saying, "Guardians often visit the school to check their child's performance, and administrators support us, but we need better tools to maintain portfolios effectively." Technologies like multimedia elements in digital

portfolios offer opportunities for students to showcase their learning in diverse formats, promoting deeper understanding and engagement (Sung et al., 2015). Vygotsky's emphasis on collaboration aligns with this need, as the shared effort of teachers, parents, and administrators can maximize the potential of technological tools. Schools can enhance the dialectic process by addressing resource gaps and providing training, ensuring teachers can mediate learning effectively. This collaborative approach not only supports the ZPD but also fosters a comprehensive and efficient system for portfolio management.

Figure 9

Technological Integration in Portfolio-based Assessment

Thus, figure no. 9 reveals that the English teachers in Nepal use technological tools, including portfolio-based assessment Laptop, excel sheets, portfolio-book records, email, printing materials, and display boards while making portfolio-based - assessments, which also shows the possibilities of technological integration on PBA in the context of Nepal.

<div align="center">

The Implementation Process of Portfolio/E-Portfolio

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The implementation process of portfolio and e-portfolio assessment is crucial for their effectiveness in education. Klenowski (2002) emphasizes that successfully implementing portfolios requires a clear framework, including well-defined objectives, assessment criteria, and active collaboration between teachers and students. This involves outlining the purpose of the portfolio and guiding students in

selecting and reflecting on their work. Similarly, Koster and Driessen (2009) further stress that educators must have the necessary skills and knowledge to support students in developing meaningful portfolios. Additionally, integrating technology can enhance accessibility, making the documentation of learning journeys more efficient and engaging. Sushil talked about how he uses e-portfolio-based assessments. He said:

> *To do this, I use a rating scale for each task. I track student names and their projects on an Excel sheet. Then, I showed it on a smart board and discussed it with the students. I also send emails to enter project details. Self-assessment and collaboration are important.*

He uses that rating scale to see how students do on their tasks, which helps make assessments clearer (Paulson et al., 1991). Digital tools like Excel help him log students' names and project work. This information is shared on a smart board for better class discussions (Selwyn, 2020). Using emails for project entries helps improve communication between students & teachers. It boosts engagement and feedback, too! By focusing on self-assessment, Sushil wants students to think about their work and progress. This helps them build self-regulation and critical thinking skills (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

Similarly, Preeti shared her teaching journey of 11 years. She noted, "We did traditional portfolio-based assessments and passed students. However, we didn't apply it practically; we only recognized them theoretically. We record things on school Facebook pages. E-portfolios were thought about but not used right." Preeti pointed out a gap between traditional ways of assessing portfolios and making them work in real life (Paulson et al., 1991). Using school Facebook pages to keep track of student activities shows an effort to share work digitally, but it might not be very organized or thorough (Selwyn, 2020). Even though Preeti thought about e-portfolios, she admits they were not used properly; there is a real need for better planning to make them effective (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

Similarly, Sarita also creates her own Facebook pages to keep students' efforts to share work digitally, showing the students' performance regularly. She mentioned issues with using e-portfolios, too. She explained, "*Using e-portfolios is tough because we lack resources. We record stuff with personal devices, but it's not organized. To do it well, schools must provide teachers with resources and training.*"

Sarita pointed out that insufficient resources make e-portfolios difficult (Selwyn, 2020). Depending on personal devices means there is no standard way to document student work, which leads to problems along the way (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Sarita also says teachers need proper training for successful implementation because professional development is key in helping educators get the skills they require to handle e-portfolios well (OECD, 2020).

Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita illustrate the implementation challenges and potential of portfolio and e-portfolio assessments, aligning with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (SCT). The Dialectic Process is reflected in Sushil's use of digital tools like Excel and smart boards for collaborative discussions, which enhance student-teacher interaction and foster active learning through feedback and self-reflection. This process encourages continuous dialogue, aligning with Vygotsky's emphasis on the social construction of knowledge. The role of mediation is evident in the use of technology, such as Facebook pages, to document and share student progress. These tools act as mediational artifacts, bridging gaps in students' abilities by providing real-time access to their work, promoting engagement, and supporting self-regulation. However, as Preeti and Sarita point out, resource constraints hinder effective e-portfolio implementation, highlighting the need for adequate technological resources and teacher training to ensure successful mediation. The ZPD is also evident as students are guided through self-assessment and portfolio management, gradually moving from dependence on teacher support to greater independence. The findings underscore the importance of aligning technology, teacher training, and resources with curriculum goals to enhance the effectiveness of portfolio-based assessments, promoting collaborative, reflective learning environments, as envisioned in Vygotsky's theory.

Figure 10
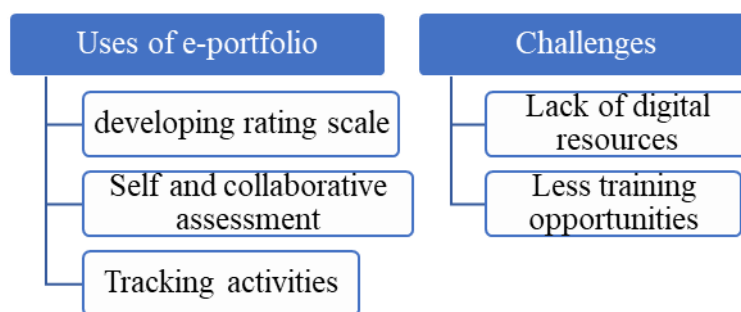
Uses and Challenges of e-Portfolio

Figure no. 10 clearly illustrates the uses of e-portfolios and their challenges in Nepal, based on the Nepali ELT teachers. The figure presents an e-portfolio for developing rating scales, self- and collaborative assessments, and tracking activities. Similarly, it also challenges, including a lack of digital resources and fewer training opportunities.

Effectiveness of Portfolio

Portfolio-based assessment is an effective tool because it actively engages students in their learning process and offers a well-rounded view of their academic and personal development. Sushil explains that when students understand how homework and projects influence their evaluations, they are more motivated to take responsibility for their learning (McMillan, 2001; Stiggins, 2002). This fosters an environment of transparency, where students are clear on how their efforts translate into grades (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Preeti further notes that students appreciate the autonomy of managing their portfolios, which promotes self-regulation and ownership of their learning (Zimmerman, 2002). By monitoring their progress in various activities, students better understand their strengths and areas needing improvement (Anderson, 2004; Schunk, 1990). However, Sarita acknowledges the challenges teachers face in documenting students' work efficiently, suggesting that additional support or the integration of technology could ease the burden without compromising classroom activities (Popham, 2005; Shavelson et al., 1991). Despite these hurdles, portfolio-based assessments remain valuable for evaluating comprehensive student development. Sushil responds:

> *Students understand that completing homework projects and demonstrating performance contributes to their assessment. They recognize that their active involvement in these tasks will lead to the assignment of grades during the evaluation process. Students are aware of how their work on homework, projects, and overall performance affects their assessment.*

This understanding is crucial as it motivates students to take responsibility for their learning and stay engaged in their tasks (McMillan, 2001). That's why by being actively involved in completing assignments and projects, students directly contribute to their assessments. This engagement helps improve learning outcomes and ensures that students continuously work towards improving their skills and knowledge (Stiggins, 2002). So, the grading recognition that active participation and performance lead to grades reinforces the importance of consistent effort and involvement in the educational process. It helps to create a transparent and fair evaluation system where students know what is expected of them and how their work will be judged (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Preeti responds:

> *Most students are happy managing their own documents and seeing their progress in various activities. The achievement level in the spelling test, acting, and talking about themselves is completely done. "I notice that students experience high satisfaction in managing their portfolios.*

This learner autonomy in handling their documentation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their learning (Zimmerman, 2002). That's why Students can track their progress across various activities, which provides them with a clear picture of their strengths and areas for improvement. This tracking is particularly effective in spelling tests, acting, and personal presentations (Schunk, 1990). Finally, the portfolio system effectively documents and recognizes student achievements, offering a comprehensive record of their progress. This recognition boosts student confidence and provides valuable feedback for further development (Anderson, 2004). Sarita Response:

> *We can evaluate through a portfolio, but there should be another teacher to help document the students' work. One must do the classroom activities. Another thing is that if we use software, we carry the device into the class and immediately record the students.*

Here, Sarita highlights the necessity for additional support in documenting students' work. Another teacher's involvement in managing the portfolio documentation allows the primary teacher to focus on classroom activities without being overburdened (Shavelson et al., 1991). Effective portfolio management requires balancing the documentation process with regular classroom activities. This balance ensures that teaching and learning are not disrupted while maintaining accurate

records of student performance (Wiggins, 1998). Using software to record students' work during class activities immediately is crucial for maintaining up-to-date and accurate documentation. This practice helps capture real-time data and reflections, making the portfolio a more dynamic and relevant tool for assessment (Popham, 2005).

Sushil's observations emphasize the importance of students understanding how their efforts in homework, projects, and overall performance contribute to their assessments. This understanding fosters a sense of accountability and encourages students to stay actively involved in their learning process. When students know that their work directly impacts their grades, they are likelier to put in consistent effort and strive for improvement (McMillan, 2001; Stiggins, 2002).

Based on the above discussion, I understood that my participants have their own level of interpretation regarding portfolio-making for the assessment. Preeti's insights into student satisfaction with managing their portfolios can be understood through Vygotsky's social constructivism, particularly the concept of self-regulation within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The autonomy that students experience in handling their documentation fosters a sense of ownership over their learning journey, which is crucial for developing self-regulation and critical thinking skills (Zimmerman, 2002). By actively tracking their progress and achievements, students can recognize their growth over time, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. This process reflects Vygotsky's idea that learning is inherently social and collaborative; students construct knowledge through interactions with their peers and educators.

Furthermore, Sarita acknowledges the practical challenges in implementing portfolios and points to the necessity of mediation support systems that facilitate the effective management of portfolios. Requiring additional resources and personnel to document student work emphasizes the need for a structured environment that balances portfolio management demands with classroom activities (Shavelson et al., 1991). As highlighted by Sarita, integrating technology further supports this mediation process, allowing for real-time documentation of student performance, thereby enhancing the relevance and accuracy of the data captured (Popham, 2005). This collective approach to portfolio management streamlines the assessment process.

It aligns with the social constructivist perspective, where individual agency and collaborative support foster a richer learning experience.
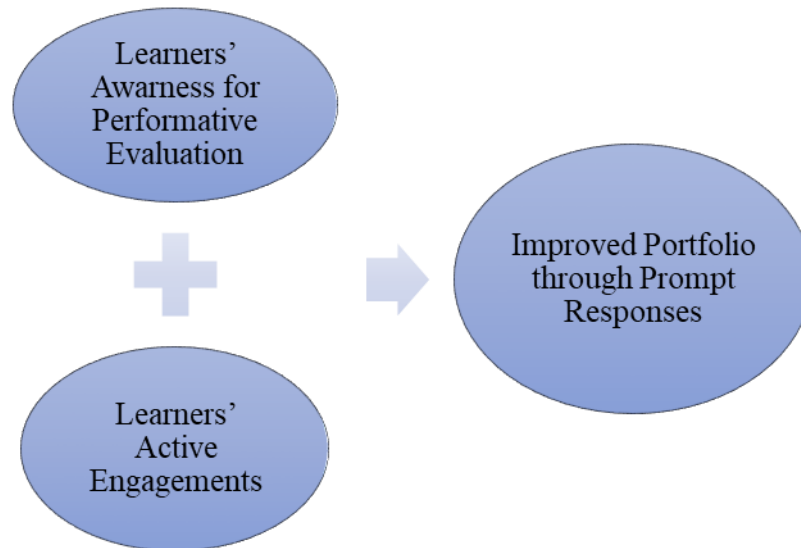
Figure 11

Effectiveness of Portfolio-based Assessment

Figure no. 11 highlights that learners' awareness through the performance evaluation and active engagement only then shows the improvement portfolio through prompt responses, which is the effectiveness of the portfolio-based assessment.

Categorical Explanation of Portfolio Implementation

Categorical explanations of portfolio implementation in educational settings provide a nuanced understanding of the various factors influencing the effectiveness of this assessment method. By categorizing these factors, educators can better identify the resources, strategies, and challenges that shape the implementation of portfolio-based assessments. Research highlights three critical categories: contextual factors, such as institutional support and resources; pedagogical factors, which include instructional practices and teacher training; and technological factors, encompassing the tools and platforms used for digital portfolios. Similarly, Barrett (2007) emphasizes that a well-structured pedagogical approach and effective technology integration are crucial for maximizing the benefits of portfolio-based assessment. This structured approach allows educators to critically assess their practices and adapt portfolio implementations to meet diverse learner needs effectively, ultimately enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. By recognizing the interplay between these categories, stakeholders can create a more supportive and effective environment for portfolio-based assessment in education. Preeti narrated:

In the reading part, I have documented the record; in the writing itself, it has been documented, and it shows most of them because it can be easily done; in speaking, that's also not possible, but a photo is there, but regularly, their level can't be recorded. I could do this; their friends or peer assessment evaluates this, and students self-assess. For example, they tell themselves that now they can do it, they are improving, they know their level and have realizations and improvements, or they know their progress level. Compared to the previous one, the latter one is better. For listening and speaking, the school has to provide recording facilities to document the students' work properly.

Preeti highlighted her documentation of reading and writing assessments, noting that these skills are easier to record while tracking speaking progress, which is challenging without regular recordings. Peer and self-assessments help students recognize their improvement, allowing them to gauge their progress over time. She focused on the need for recording facilities to document listening and speaking skills in the school properly. The idea of establishing better resources for recording, Chang et al. (1996) emphasize that electronic portfolios offer a valuable solution for tracking student progress, particularly in EFL contexts where speaking opportunities are limited. The study highlights how electronic portfolios support teachers in overcoming challenges associated with assessing speaking skills, a skill typically difficult to measure via paper-based assessments. With adequate recording resources, educators could use electronic portfolios to provide a more comprehensive monitoring system, significantly improving portfolio assessments' effectiveness and depth in tracking learner progress. Therefore, establishing better resources for recording would allow for more thorough monitoring and enhance the effectiveness of portfolio assessments. Likewise, Sarita said:

In our case, activities are done based on learning achievements based on the curriculum. Like, we have provided learning achievement to the people in the course. Then, print out for each student. For example, I have created 44 files for 44 students in my class. I have filled out the children's family background on the form. After that, the learning achievement with the rating scale plus the project work given by the children. I have kept a record of the assessments made by the students.

From my perspective, Sarita focuses on a structured approach to portfolio management, aligning activities with curriculum-based learning outcomes. She systematically organized student files, recording key information like family backgrounds, learning achievements, assessment ratings, and completed project work.

Susilo (2024) emphasizes the significant role of AI in creating personalized and comprehensive educational experiences, noting that AI enables continuous monitoring of students' emotional, behavioural, and academic development. This capability aids educators in identifying areas requiring intervention and personal support, which can ultimately build a more thorough record of each student's progress. Furthermore, Susilo describes how AI facilitates inclusive learning by providing tailored resources and access for students with disabilities, thus supporting diverse educational needs. This aligns with the intention to maintain comprehensive documentation of student progress by allowing a more detailed, individualized approach to tracking achievements and challenges in students' learning journeys.

Sarita's approach highlights a systematic organization of student portfolios aligned with curriculum-based outcomes, where each student's file includes family background, achievements, ratings, and project work. This structured documentation supports individualized tracking of progress and aligns well with Susilo's (2024) insights on the role of AI in creating personalized educational records. As mentioned in the Dialectical learning process in the social constructivism theory of learning by Vygotsky (1978), collecting students' portfolios helps the teacher become familiar with students and treat them accordingly. Sharma (2018) stated that PBA helps educators address emotional, behavioral, and academic needs and facilitates inclusive access, especially for students with disabilities. These methods contribute to a holistic approach to tracking students' learning journeys, supporting tailored interventions and broader educational inclusivity.

While I asked Sushil about the challenges in implementing internal assessments alongside exams, how has the absence of a designated time slot impacted the maintenance and effectiveness of portfolio-based assessments within the current system? He said:

> *There is currently no designated time for internal assessment during terminal exam hours. Continuous evaluation is essential to decide whether to proceed with the lesson or focus on maintaining portfolios. The challenge lies not in*

conducting exams, which are relatively easy for teachers, but in implementing internal assessments for student achievement. It is beneficial to follow the roadmap of internal evaluation, allocating 36 marks for various activities and four marks for participation, totaling 40 marks. Proper implementation requires training for teachers on when and how to conduct assessments. Providing training and ensuring teachers apply this knowledge in the field at the right time is crucial. Without a well-defined time slot, teachers may find it challenging to balance the demands of exams, internal assessments, and teaching in the classroom. This has been observed in practice.

He noted that there's currently no dedicated time for internal assessment during terminal exam hours, which complicates the continuous evaluation of students. The main issue isn't the exams themselves, as they are straightforward for teachers to conduct, but rather the difficulty of implementing internal assessments to gauge student achievement. He emphasized the importance of a structured approach, where 36 marks are allocated for activities and 4 for participation, totaling 40 marks. Effective internal assessment requires teacher training on timing and methodology, but it's equally essential that teachers apply this training practically. Without a clear schedule for these assessments, balancing exams, internal assessments, and daily teaching becomes challenging, as seen in practice. In the above support on the portfolio, Dema's (2024) study on English writing portfolios underscores the effectiveness of structured, feedback-driven strategies in enhancing students' writing skills and assessment scores. Dema highlights three specific portfolio assessment strategies: iterative feedback and revision, improving writing proficiency as students correct errors through continuous feedback, leading most to scores above 80%. Another is consistent feedback from a single assessor, which provides clarity and focus, helping students achieve high scores.

The last is the segmented assessment stage, where students focus on refining distinct elements of writing, yielding the highest assessment scores, with nearly all students achieving full marks. These strategies emphasize how targeted feedback at different stages of the writing process supports students in developing writing competencies, strengthening their skill levels and assessment outcomes. Adopting a structured and collaborative approach to portfolio assessments is important, ensuring students gain comprehensive insights and refinement opportunities throughout their

learning journey. Similarly, setting a designated time for these assessments helps build a routine, foster student accountability, and ensure regular reflection on learning objectives and progress.

In summary, the perspectives shared by Preeti, Sarita, and Sushil reveal key factors in implementing practical portfolio-based assessments. Preeti emphasizes the role of peer and self-assessments in tracking progress in reading and writing. However, she highlights the need for recording resources to properly assess speaking skills, as supported by Chang et al. (1996) study on electronic portfolios. Sarita's approach illustrates a systematic, curriculum-aligned structure in organizing portfolios, complemented by Susilo's (2024) insights on AI, which can enhance individualized monitoring and support inclusive learning needs. Sushil underscores the importance of a dedicated time slot for internal assessments, noting that balancing assessments with exams and classroom teaching is challenging without it. Dema's (2024) findings further reinforce that structured, feedback-driven strategies significantly improve student outcomes. Collectively, these viewpoints highlight the need for a structured, well-resourced, and time-allotted approach to portfolio assessments, supporting continuous improvement and holistic tracking of student learning.

The findings from Preeti, Sarita, and Sushil reveal the complexities and potential of portfolio-based assessments in education, which align with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (SCT), particularly in the areas of Dialectic Process, Mediation, and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Sarita's systematic approach to organizing student portfolios based on curriculum outcomes and her acknowledgment of AI's potential for individualized support reflects mediation. Technology and structured feedback act as mediational tools, helping bridge the gap between what students can accomplish independently and with support. Additionally, Sarita's challenges in implementing e-portfolios and Sushil's discussion about the need for dedicated time slots for assessments illustrate the importance of adequate resources and structured guidance within the ZPD, allowing students to develop their skills with appropriate support. These insights highlight the need for a structured, collaborative approach to portfolio-based assessments that integrates technology, teacher training, and resource allocation, aligning with Vygotsky's vision of creating

a scaffolded learning environment that supports continuous development and student ownership of learning.

Figure 12

Categorical Portfolio-based Assessment

Figure no. 12, categorical portfolio-based assessments are highlighted by the participants that recorded skills show the reading skills that include books reading, literature time, worksheets, and the same recorded skills in writing skills show the worksheet and assignments. Similarly, talking about the unrecorded skills like listening and speaking, but less practice is going on in listening, and the speaking skills, role play, and storytelling time are highlighted. Finally, Collaborative assessment represents peer and self-assessments. Finally, the three categorical portfolio-based assessments are shown in figure 12.

<div align="center">Portfolio for Structured Assessment</div>

The structure assessment links the views of the three participants' practices and is summarized. The focus is on how each participant uses rating scales, feedback, and self-reflection to foster deeper learning and critical thinking, which aligns with Vygotsky's social learning theories. Sushil shared:

I use rating scales to ensure students receive clear, fair, and consistent task feedback. This helps students identify their strengths and areas of improvement while tracking their learning progress.

Sushil integrates a rating scale for evaluating unit-wise tasks, a core component of structured assessment. This method aligns with social constructivist principles by ensuring that feedback is consistently provided, allowing students to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement. The rating scale helps maintain fairness in grading and provides clear feedback, guiding students toward more effective learning strategies (Cotton, 1995). His structured approach to assessment

supports continuous reflection, which encourages self-reflection and ownership of learning. A rating scale for evaluating unit-wise tasks exemplifies a structured approach to assessment. According to Cotton (1995), rating scales provide clear grading guidelines, ensuring that grades are consistent and fair. This approach also helps give students specific feedback, helping them understand their strengths and areas where they need to improve (McMillan, 2001). Preeti shared:

> *Through feedback, I encourage my students to reflect on their work, set goals, and take ownership of their learning. The portfolio-based assessment and self-reflection improve their comprehension and academic performance from time to time.*

Preeti emphasizes the importance of targeted and detailed feedback. She supports self-reflection by guiding students to assess their learning. Such feedback loops encourage students to set personal learning goals, which enhances learning ownership. Continuous feedback paired with self-assessment significantly boosts students' confidence and performance in their academic journey, aligning with the findings of Hattie & Timperley (2007). Her use of peer and self-assessments highlights the Dialectic Process, where students engage in collaborative discussions and self-reflection, promoting active learning and helping them understand their progress over time. Similarly, Preeti focuses on providing targeted and detailed feedback; teachers can guide students toward more effective learning strategies, fostering a deeper comprehension of the material. She further claimed that such feedback encourages self-reflection, allowing students to take ownership of their learning process and set personal goals for improvement. Over time, this continuous cycle of feedback and self-assessment can significantly enhance student performance and confidence in their academic abilities (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The structured assessment could also be practical if it consists of unit-wise evaluation with tasks, continuous, detailed feedback for improvement, and ensuring comprehension of the contents. Sarita shared:

> *I have realized the significance of using portfolio-based assessment. From that mindset, I emphasize goal-setting and regular reflection for my students. This helps them understand where to improve and motivates them to engage more actively in learning.*

Sarita adopts a structured approach by focusing on unit-wise evaluations and encouraging reflection. Her emphasis on setting goals helps students take active ownership of their learning process, motivating them to continue improving. She aligns this approach with the constructivist perspective of fostering deeper comprehension through ongoing dialogue and reflection. Structured assessment, grounded in the principles of social constructivism, provides a framework for understanding and enhancing student learning through collaborative and contextualized evaluation practices. This approach emphasizes the importance of social interaction and shared experiences in learning, as learners construct knowledge through meaningful engagement with peers and educators (Vygotsky, 1978). Educators can create an environment where students actively participate in their learning journeys by implementing structured assessments that promote dialogue, reflection, and peer feedback. This fosters deeper understanding and cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving skills, aligning assessment practices with the dynamic nature of knowledge construction in social contexts (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Such assessments are powerful tools for recognizing diverse learning paths while supporting a collective educational experience that enhances individual and group learning outcomes.

Digital Tools for Documentation and Practice

In today's educational landscape, digital tools are pivotal in structuring portfolio-based assessments and enhancing the documentation process and overall learning experience. These tools facilitate the organization of student work and promote engagement and reflection, essential components of effective assessment practices. As educators increasingly integrate technology into their teaching methodologies, platforms such as Google Drive, Padlet, and e-portfolio software have emerged as valuable resources for compiling and showcasing student achievements (Klenowski et al., 2006). By leveraging digital documentation tools, teachers can create dynamic portfolios that reflect students' learning journeys and foster a deeper understanding of their progress. Integrating technology into portfolio-based assessment streamlines the process and aligns with contemporary pedagogical approaches emphasizing student agency and active participation in learning. According to Zainuddin (2017), using Excel sheets facilitates student data organization. Schmid (2008) notes that smart boards enhance the accessibility and

interactivity of classroom activities, making student records more manageable and engaging.

As mentioned by Sushil, Incorporating digital tools, such as Excel sheets and smart boards, enhances the organization and accessibility of student records. Displaying this information on a smart board allows for interactive discussions, making the assessment process more transparent and engaging for students. This practice keeps records organized and integrates technology into daily classroom activities. Using school Facebook pages for recording student work, as Preeti mentioned:

> *I always reflect and try to adapt to digital documentation methods, which I mostly upload on social media sites. However, social media platforms might not provide the structure and security required for comprehensive educational records.*

While there in the sharing position, Sarita also explained;

> *I have two Facebook accounts, one for personal use and another for my teaching activities. From my teaching account, I regularly post about classroom events, clearly listing the date, the activity, and the skills being worked on, like reading or speaking. I also share videos and photos of my student's work, providing a regular record of what's happening in class for others to follow and engage with.*

This method, while innovative, highlights the need for more specialized tools designed for educational purposes. The use of social media also raises concerns about data privacy and the safeguarding of students' personal information, which are critical in educational contexts (Selwyn, 2012). Furthermore, the lack of standardization in how these records are maintained and accessed can lead to inconsistencies, making it difficult to track student progress accurately over time (Losh, 2004). To address these issues, educational institutions should consider investing in dedicated digital platforms designed explicitly for managing student work, ensuring security and consistency in record-keeping. In this regard, Reimers and Schleicher (2020) present the significance of using such tools to streamline the documentation process and provide educators with better analytical capabilities to assess and support student learning effectively.

Collaboration and Communication

Collaboration and communication are two significant aspects that help teachers structure their assessment process, especially in a portfolio-based assessment. In this support, Sharma (2018) highlighted that we communicate and collaborate with parents, teachers, and the community while collecting portfolios of our students, which would help us structure our assessment by systematizing the overall process of collecting students' information. Using references from local literature, Shrestha (2015) stated that interaction between stakeholders supports students' holistic development.

Sarita highlighted the value of collaboration among teachers, parents, and students. She shared, "Guardians regularly visit the school to check their child's performance and help with their difficulties. This collaborative effort creates a supportive environment for students and motivates them to improve." Sarina also emphasized how communication with parents builds trust and ensures that everyone involved understands the child's progress and the goals of portfolio-based assessment.

Preeti reinforced this idea, stating, "Coordination between teachers and the administration is crucial. We've discussed how to implement portfolio-based assessment, and the administration has been supportive by providing resources, even if limited." She noted that clear communication between teachers and school leadership helps address challenges and creates a shared responsibility for maintaining the quality of assessments. Preeti also highlighted that engaging with parents regularly, especially during result days, makes them more aware of their child's progress and the assessment process.

Sushil's perspective further underlined the importance of collaboration. He shared, "Maintaining portfolios isn't just the teacher's job. Students, teachers, and parents all play a role. Students must self-assess, and guardians must monitor their child's behavioral changes and learning achievements." Sushil emphasized that collaboration fosters accountability, with students taking ownership of their learning while parents and teachers provide the necessary support. Communication, he added, helps to keep all stakeholders informed and involved, ensuring that the assessment process remains transparent and effective.

Almost every participant has shared their views on how collaboration and communication play roles in a portfolio-based assessment. As highlighted by Sushil,

the emphasis on email collaboration fosters an environment where students actively participate in their learning process. By sharing project work and engaging in feedback exchanges, students, teachers, and parents work together, enhancing communication and supporting continuous learning. This collaborative approach empowers students to take ownership of their progress, aligning with portfolio-based assessment goals and the learning process. Regular communication between students and teachers ensures that project work is continuously updated and reviewed, promoting a collaborative learning culture (Hattie, 2012). This consistent exchange of information keeps students engaged and builds a stronger connection between them and their teachers (Garrison & Akyol, 2013). Involving students in ongoing discussions about their progress encourages them to take ownership of their learning (Hattie, 2012). Additionally, this approach allows teachers to provide timely support and guidance, addressing any issues or questions as they arise (Garrison & Akyol, 2013). As a result, the collaborative use of emails creates a dynamic learning environment where students feel supported and motivated to achieve their goals.

The findings underscore PBA from Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita highlight the key role of collaboration and communication in implementing portfolio-based assessments, aligning with Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (SCT), particularly in the areas of Dialectic Process, Mediation, and ZPD. Sushil's use of emails for sharing project work and feedback fosters a collaborative learning environment, reflecting the Dialectic Process, where students, teachers, and parents engage in ongoing dialogue, reinforcing the active co-construction of knowledge. Preeti's reflection on using social media platforms underscores the importance of mediation, as digital tools like social media or specialized educational platforms help bridge the gap between students' current abilities and their learning goals, providing both access and support for self-regulated learning. Sarita's use of digital tools and her emphasis on better resources highlight the ZPD, where students can achieve tasks beyond their independent capabilities with the right guidance and resources. The findings emphasize that effective portfolio-based assessment requires not only structured feedback and continuous collaboration but also adequate technological support and teacher training, all of which align with Vygotsky's vision of a scaffolded, interactive learning environment where students actively construct knowledge through social interaction and support.
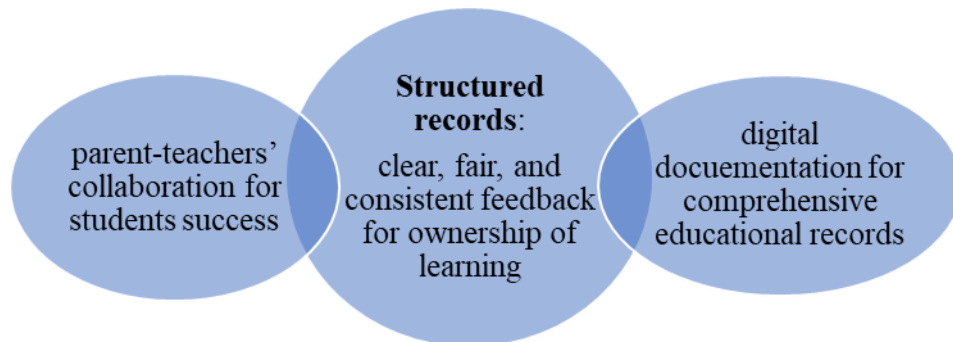
Figure 13

Structured Educational Records

Figure no. 13 emphasizes the importance of maintaining structured records while maintaining records for every student. It highlights that these records should provide clear, fair, and consistent feedback that helps students take ownership of their learning. The process involves strong collaboration between parents and teachers to ensure student success. Finally, this structured approach achieves digital documentation, offering a comprehensive, possible way to maintain educational records, supporting continuous improvement and accountability.

Chapter Summary

Chapter V is about the database discussion on the theme shared by the participants. While there, this detailed examination of portfolio-based assessment incorporates theoretical frameworks like the dialectic process, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and mediation. Educators facilitate ongoing assessment by employing portfolios, encouraging students to reflect on their learning and develop self-regulation. The dialectic process supports meaningful exchanges between students and teachers, while the ZPD allows learners to tackle tasks within their capability with proper guidance. Mediation through feedback, tools, and peer interaction plays a key role in tracking progress and offering a comprehensive view of student development. This method fosters collaborative, reflective learning tailored to each student's growth path.

CHAPTER VI

KEY INSIGHTS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND MY REFLECTION

In this chapter, I present the overall summary and insights of my research study based on the above theoretical discussion and the experiences shared by my participants. Based on the key insights, I conclude. I also depict the implications, reflections, and experiences I gained from the beginning to the end of this research.

Key Insights

This research study explored the implementation of portfolio-based assessments (PBA) in educational settings, specifically focusing on the perspectives and experiences shared by the participants, i.e., Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita. Through these insights, several key themes emerged that provided a deeper understanding of the complexities, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing PBA in the classroom. The key insights are categorized into Thematic, Methodological, and Theoretical Insights.

The thematic insights highlight the components and influencing factors that help participants understand Portfoilo-Based Assessment in Nepal. Similarly, in the methodological insights, the reasons for exploring participants' narratives of experiencing Portfolio-based assessment through a narrative methodological approach. In theoretical insights, the finding suggests the rationales of using and aligning the theoretical notions of the Socioconstructivist of Vygotsky while exploring the effectiveness of using portfolio-based assessment in the ELT classroom.

Teachers' Conceptualizing Factors of Understanding PBA

Conceptualizing the meaning and understanding of portfolio assessment has several factors that directly influence the knowledge of teachers who use a portfolio as an assessment tool in their classroom (Shrestha, 2019). Factors, including recourses, skills, curriculum alignment, government policy, and the nature of parents, shape the conceptual understanding of PBA. During the pandemic, the participants constructed their understanding of portfolio-based assessment (PBA) through a combination of adaptive practices, collaboration, and the strategic use of digital tools. The importance of flexibility by using unpaid software, portfolio books, and messenger groups to engage students and parents, ensuring inclusivity despite

technological limitations. Maintain detailed individual records and create rubrics to track student progress systematically, align with curriculum goals, and foster reflective learning. Adapting practices by combining digital and physical resources to accommodate economically disadvantaged students while fostering parental involvement. These experiences, guided by the theoretical framework of social constructivism, showcased the role of mediation through tools like rubrics and digital platforms, the dialectic process of communication between stakeholders, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in supporting students' transition from guided to independent learning. Collectively, these factors underscore how adaptability, collaboration, and resourcefulness enabled teachers to implement PBA effectively during challenging times.

The Importance of Student Engagement and Ownership

A consistent theme across the findings is the critical role of self-assessment and student involvement in the success of portfolio-based assessments. When students understand how their efforts, such as homework, projects, and class participation, affect their overall evaluation, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning. The student's awareness of the direct impact of their efforts on their assessments significantly motivates them to be more engaged. This aligns with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, where knowledge is constructed individually and through social interactions and reflection. One of the core insights is the role of portfolios in fostering student autonomy. By involving students in self-assessment and continuous feedback, portfolios encourage them to take responsibility for their learning. This process promotes self-regulation and deeper engagement with educational content. From the above discussion the study suggests that teachers should actively integrate reflective practices into their teaching, enabling students to evaluate their performance regularly, set learning goals, and track their progress.

By involving students in self-assessment and providing consistent feedback opportunities, they can actively engage in their learning journeys, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. This process fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and the development of metacognitive skills essential for lifelong learning.

Challenges in Technological Integration

Another key insight from the study is the digital divide and the challenges associated with integrating technology in portfolio-based assessments. The issues include insufficient resources for digital documentation, particularly for tasks like speaking assessments, and the limitations of using social media platforms for portfolio management. While platforms like Facebook can document students' progress, they lack the structure and security required for comprehensive, consistent educational records. This gap underscores the need for adequate technological infrastructure, including recording devices, appropriate software, and secure platforms explicitly designed for educational purposes. Furthermore, the lack of resources also highlights the importance of teacher training in utilizing digital tools effectively. Without these resources and training, digital portfolios risk being poorly implemented, affecting their effectiveness in documenting and enhancing student learning.

The Role of Collaboration

The findings also emphasized the importance of collaboration in successfully implementing portfolio-based assessments. The use of emails to communicate with both students and parents about assignments and projects fostered an ongoing dialogue, which is key for continuous feedback and improvement. This collaborative approach ensures students stay engaged in learning and strengthens the partnership between educators and families. Vygotsky's Dialectic Process aligns with this approach, where knowledge is co-constructed through interaction. Feedback and dialogue, as illustrated in this study, help students reflect on their progress and gain new perspectives from their peers, teachers, and even parents. Regular communication through various channels supports a dynamic learning environment where students are more motivated to take ownership of their work and improve continuously.

Structured Approach to Assessment

The study also highlighted the value of a structured assessment system in portfolio-based assessments. Using rating scales, rubrics, and project-based evaluations to provide clarity, consistency, and transparency in the assessment process. These structured assessments help ensure that students receive actionable feedback aligned with clear expectations and learning objectives. This systematic approach enhances fairness and accountability and allows students to track their

progress over time, making it easier to identify improvement areas. Using such structured tools promotes a more organized and transparent assessment process, which is crucial for fostering a sense of fairness and equity in the classroom. It also gives teachers a more transparent framework for evaluating student work, allowing them to give specific, targeted feedback that aligns with curriculum goals. This structure encourages student growth and teacher reflection, highlighting areas where further support or adjustments might be needed.

Resource and Time Management Challenges

Apart from some noticeable effectiveness of using portfolio-based assessment, teachers also struggle to manage appropriate resources and time for collecting, arranging, and documenting information in the portfolio-making process. The effective implementation of Portfolio-Based Assessment (PBA) faces significant resource and time management challenges. There are difficulties in balancing classroom activities with the extensive documentation required for portfolios. Teachers often struggle with the absence of dedicated time slots for internal assessments, making it hard to manage teaching responsibilities alongside grading and maintaining portfolios. These challenges emphasize adequate time allocation, school-wide support, and professional development. Without these measures, managing PBA can overwhelm educators, detracting from their ability to enhance student learning.

Conclusions

Based on the insights gathered from the experiences of the participants and the theoretical framework guiding this research, it is evident that portfolio-based assessment (PBA) can be a highly effective tool for enhancing student learning and engagement when implemented with careful consideration and planning. PBA offers a holistic approach to assessment by encouraging students to engage with their learning actively, reflect on their progress, and take ownership of their academic journey. Integrating digital tools significantly facilitates this process, providing students with accessible platforms to document their work, receive continuous feedback, and track their development over time. Digital tools such as e-portfolios, smart boards, and platforms like Google Drive and Excel help streamline the documentation process, ensuring that student work is organized and easily accessible for both students and teachers. Furthermore, structured feedback and self-assessment mechanisms encourage students to critically reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement,

fostering self-regulation and the development of essential skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and independent learning.

However, the success of PBA is not automatic and is contingent upon several critical factors. Adequate resources, including technology, time, and infrastructure, are necessary to ensure that students and teachers can fully benefit from this assessment method. As observed in the experiences of Preeti, Sarita, and Sushil, the digital divide and lack of access to essential tools, such as recording devices for speaking assessments or appropriate software for managing e-portfolios, present significant barriers to the effective use of PBA. These technological challenges must be addressed through resource investment, including providing devices and software that enable students and teachers to utilize portfolios effectively.

Teacher training is another crucial component for the successful implementation of PBA. As the study has highlighted, even with the right resources, teachers must possess the skills and knowledge to effectively integrate portfolio assessments into their teaching practices. Teachers need to be trained not only on the technical aspects of using digital tools but also on providing meaningful feedback, guiding students through self-assessment processes, and ensuring that portfolios align with curriculum goals. Professional development programs should be ongoing, allowing teachers to share best practices, collaborate with peers, and stay updated on the latest tools and strategies for portfolio management.

Furthermore, the active involvement of parents is essential to the success of portfolio-based assessments. Parents can play a pivotal role in supporting their child's learning by regularly reviewing portfolios, providing feedback, and encouraging self-reflection. Collaboration among educators, students, and parents is key to creating a supportive learning environment that reinforces the value of PBA. As illustrated in the experiences of Sushil, Preeti, and Sarita, communication through emails, meetings, and digital platforms strengthens the partnership between home and school, leading to better student outcomes. Parents engaged in the assessment process are more likely to support their child's educational journey, helping to create a more comprehensive and consistent approach to learning.

Additionally, the study revealed that ongoing collaboration among educators, students, and parents is vital for ensuring that portfolio-based assessments are meaningful and aligned with educational goals. Regular dialogue, feedback, and peer

assessment create a dynamic learning environment where students can continuously improve and develop their skills. Collaboration ensures that students receive timely support and promotes an inclusive learning atmosphere that accommodates the diverse needs of all learners.

Thus, portfolio-based assessment holds great potential for enhancing learning, providing comprehensive insights into student progress, and encouraging reflective practices. However, addressing the challenges associated with technology integration, resource allocation, teacher training, and parental involvement is essential to fully realizing these benefits. When adequately supported, portfolio-based assessment can become a transformative practice that enhances student engagement, fosters critical thinking, and provides a holistic view of a student's academic and personal growth. Therefore, the successful implementation of PBA depends not only on the careful planning and execution of assessment strategies but also on the collaboration and support of all stakeholders in the educational community.

Implications

The implications of portfolio-based assessment extend across various educational stakeholders, including teachers, policymakers, trainers, school administration, and researchers. This approach to assessment shifts the focus from traditional grading to a more holistic evaluation of student learning, personal development, and critical thinking skills. While portfolio assessment has been recognized globally for its potential to foster deeper learning and self-reflection, its effective implementation requires support in teacher training, policy reform, and technological infrastructure. The benefits and challenges of adopting portfolio-based assessment in diverse educational contexts, including Nepal, can be better understood by exploring the implications for these key groups.

Implication for Teachers

Teachers can gain valuable insights into implementing portfolio-based assessment (PBA) in their classrooms. This research emphasizes how PBA can shift the focus from traditional testing to a more holistic evaluation of students' progress, creativity, and critical thinking. It provides practical solutions to challenges such as managing documentation, time constraints, and balancing portfolios with existing workloads. However, the research acknowledges challenges like increased workload and limited familiarity with PBA processes (Dysthe & Engelsen, 2011). By utilizing

digital tools for portfolio management, as Burner (2014) suggests, teachers can streamline documentation while focusing on meaningful feedback. Teachers can also adopt strategies highlighted in the study to foster deeper student engagement and reflective learning. Additionally, this research demonstrates how continuous professional development and teacher collaboration can strengthen their capacity to use portfolios to enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

Implications for Trainers

Trainers can use the findings to design more targeted and impactful professional development programs. This research outlines teachers' specific challenges in adopting PBA, such as unfamiliarity with digital tools and managing time-intensive processes. Trainers can develop workshops and training sessions that provide hands-on experience with portfolio management, digital integration, and feedback techniques. The study also highlights the importance of fostering a supportive learning community among educators, enabling trainers to create platforms for collaborative learning and exchange best practices. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) emphasize that professional training must address classroom realities, such as time management and assessment alignment. This study advocates for experiential learning models where teachers practice PBA techniques in collaborative settings. Trainers can build communities of practice, as supported by Smith and Tillema (2001), encouraging knowledge-sharing among educators to sustain innovation in assessment practices. By addressing real-world classroom needs, trainers can ensure their programs are practical and relevant to educators' contexts.

Implication for Policy Makers

Policymakers are instrumental in ensuring the successful implementation of portfolio-based assessment by establishing policies that support its integration and providing the necessary resources. Black and Wiliam (1998), advocate for their work on formative assessment and argue that education systems should evolve to include more holistic evaluation methods like portfolios, which offer richer insights into student learning. In Nepal, the Ministry of Education (2015) has recognized the need to modernize assessment practices, but there is still limited adoption of portfolios in the national curriculum. Internationally, Dixon et al. (2011) stress the importance of prioritizing digital infrastructure to support portfolio-based assessment. Similarly, the OECD (2013) points to the need for equitable access to technology to ensure that all

students, regardless of their background, can benefit from this type of assessment. Addressing these technological inequalities is particularly critical in rural and underserved communities globally and within Nepal to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to engage in portfolio-based learning. These disparities are vital for inclusive education.

Implications for School Administration

The study reveals the pivotal role of administrators in creating conducive environments for PBA. This includes allocating resources for digital tools and facilitating training programs to bridge gaps in teacher readiness (Dixon et al., 2011). The research highlights the need for administrators to advocate for systemic changes integrating PBA into the school curriculum, ensuring alignment with national education goals. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders and addressing logistical barriers, administrators can drive equitable access to PBA, especially in under-resourced settings (OECD, 2013). This dissertation also encourages schools to adopt flexible policies that balance traditional assessments with innovative approaches, promoting holistic student evaluation.

Implications for Researchers

This research opens avenues for further exploration into the long-term impact of PBA on student learning, teacher practices, and policy implementation. Researchers can build on these findings to study how PBA influences students' critical thinking and self-regulation skills over time. The study also highlights the potential of digital portfolios, inviting future research into their scalability and effectiveness in resource-constrained settings. Barrett (2007) emphasizes that portfolios provide rich longitudinal data, making them an ideal tool for studying student progress over time. Future research can also explore the intersection of technology and assessment, particularly in developing countries like Nepal, where digital tools can play a transformative role (Klenowski et al., 2006). Moreover, the challenges identified in this research, such as time management and teacher training gaps, can serve as a foundation for exploring solutions in diverse educational contexts. Researchers can contribute to the broader global discourse on transforming assessment practices by addressing these areas.

My Reflections

The journey into exploring portfolio-based assessment for English language teaching has been transformative, marking a shift in both my professional perspective and academic understanding. My research interest was born from a simple yet compelling question: How can student learning be assessed more holistically? Early on, I was driven by a desire to address the inadequacies of standardized testing, which seemed to overlook the complexity and individuality of student learning. I envisioned portfolio-based assessment as a possible solution and an alternative method that could more authentically represent a student's learning process, critical thinking, and progress over time.

Initially, my focus was largely on understanding the mechanics of portfolio-based assessment and its potential to better evaluate students' academic achievements. My research was primarily inclined toward identifying the benefits of using portfolios over traditional tests, especially in fostering student reflection, engagement, and deeper learning. However, as I dove into the literature and conducted interviews and observations, my research took on a more complex and grounded direction.

As I studied theories and empirical research, particularly the work of Elbow and Belanoff, Hamp-Lyons, Lam, and Condon, I gained a broader understanding of how portfolios could transform assessment into an empowering process for students. I came to appreciate the flexibility and potential of portfolios as tools for assessment and as catalysts for enhancing student autonomy, motivation, and ownership over their learning. This deeper understanding was a turning point in my research, prompting me to focus on how portfolios could celebrate learner diversity and help bridge the gap between assessment and meaningful educational experiences.

Yet, this realization also brought an awareness of the inherent challenges in implementing portfolio-based assessments, particularly in a developing educational context like Nepal's. The theoretical attraction of portfolios was tempered by the practical hurdles of limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and the time-intensive nature of portfolio maintenance and evaluation. I began to see that the research needed to move beyond the idealized benefits of portfolios and address the practicalities of implementation, including alignment with curriculum goals, support from policymakers, and necessary infrastructural resources. This shift represented a pivotal change in my research focus as I turned my attention to the potential of

portfolio-based assessments and the obstacles hindering their successful adoption in Nepalese schools.

As a teacher in Kathmandu, I have always been aware of the limitations of traditional assessment methods. I have seen how standardized tests fail to reflect the real capabilities of my students, often reducing their learning to scores that say little about their critical thinking, creativity, or individual progress. This practical experience as a teacher significantly shaped my approach to the research.

However, as my research progressed, my role expanded beyond that of a practitioner to include that of an advocate. I found myself studying portfolio-based assessments and actively advocating for their adoption. Through conversations with fellow educators, my perspective evolved from merely researching the topic to promoting portfolios as a viable alternative to traditional assessment methods. My dual role as a researcher and teacher allowed me to bring a grounded perspective to the study. I could understand the challenges teachers face in the classroom while also identifying the broader structural changes needed to support portfolio-based assessments in Nepal.

I am more deeply committed to advocating for educational reform at this stage in my research journey. I now view portfolios as educational equity and student empowerment assessment tools and instruments. As I continue engaging with teachers and administrators, I have gained valuable insights into how portfolio-based assessments can be tailored to Nepalese classrooms' specific needs and constraints. This dual role has allowed me to influence my research from a practical standpoint, ensuring that my study's conclusions are grounded in the realities of the educational environment in Nepal.

One of the most significant growth areas throughout this research journey has been enhancing my methodological approach. Initially, my focus was largely on theoretical frameworks and literature reviews, which would provide the necessary foundation for my study. However, as the research progressed, it became clear that a purely theoretical approach would not capture the full scope of portfolio-based assessment's impact or challenges.

I realized the need for a more strong empirical component in my research. This realization led me to embrace qualitative methodologies, including interviews, classroom observations, and thematic data coding. The qualitative approach allowed

me to collect rich, detailed insights from teachers and students, which provided a deeper understanding of the practical challenges and benefits of portfolio-based assessments. The shift from a literature-based study to one that included empirical research significantly strengthened my methodological framework, allowing me to triangulate findings and develop a more comprehensive view of the issue.

I further refined my methodological rigor by utilizing Saldana's thematic coding process, which includes open, axial, selective, and thematic coding. Through this coding process, I was able to categorize and interpret data more systematically, ensuring that I captured both the shades of teacher perceptions and the broader themes emerging from the data. The shift toward a more systematic, empirical approach enriched my analysis and helped me overcome participant bias and data saturation challenges.

In addition, my methodological strength has been enhanced through a critical reflection on the potential biases in the study, particularly my own as both a practitioner and advocate. I have consciously tried to remain open to all findings, even when they challenged my initial assumptions or preferences. By broadening the participant pool and considering a more longitudinal approach to the research, I have worked to ensure that my study remains as objective and comprehensive as possible.

In reflection, my research journey has been a deeply enriching personal and professional growth process. What began as a simple inquiry into an alternative assessment method has evolved into a broader investigation of educational equity, student empowerment, and systemic reform. As a practitioner and advocate, I have engaged with the topic from multiple perspectives, allowing for a richer and more nuanced study. Furthermore, my methodological strength has been greatly enhanced by incorporating qualitative research techniques and a deeper commitment to empirical rigor.

My journey during my research deepened my understanding of how portfolio-based assessments can be adaptable and collaborative, making them more inclusive and effective. At the beginning of my teaching career, I used to believe that portfolio-based assessment was primarily structured in nature. However, my research taught me that flexibility is equally important for ensuring inclusivity within the contextual setting, as social and other relevant aspects must be carefully considered to create a balanced and practical approach. I also learned that maintaining the portfolio is not

solely the teacher's responsibility; ensuring authenticity in assessment requires triangulation, involving collaborative efforts among teachers, students, and even parents or peers. This collaboration enhances the reliability and authenticity of the process. Another is from this research study. I learned that self-assessment enhances the learner's autonomy and that many students can be assessed very few times. Finally, I realize that regular feedback improves students' writing skills; the teacher's role is to develop the learners' writing skills. As I progress, I remain committed to advocating for portfolio-based assessments for holistic, equitable education in Nepal. This research has broadened my understanding of portfolio-based assessment and solidified my role as an advocate for meaningful, student-centered reform in assessment practices.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Interview Guideline

Title: Teachers Perception and practices of portfolio-based assessment

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Could you please introduce yourself sir/madam? (prompt: name, location, level, experience, education (MA/Med)
2. How do you evaluate your students? How many exams (terminal/final) are there in your school? What are the systems for evaluation in your school?
3. Does your school have portfolio assessment system? Do you assess your students based on portfolio?
4. How do you understand portfolio-based assessment?
5. Could you please provide some examples that includes portfolio-based assessment?
6. Do you think portfolio-based assessment is effective?
7. How do you think this is different from other assessment? How do you think it is different? Could you please give some examples?
8. How often do you maintain portfolio?
9. Could you please mention some common areas content where you maintain portfolio?
10. How do you use that portfolio to assess students?
11. Are you happy assessing students based on the works they have done?
12. How do students respond to your assessment systems?
13. Do they accept their achievement based on portfolio?
14. Could you please share one of such stories where students seem happy working with for their portfolio?
15. What are the challenges that you face in portfolio and assessment?
16. How do you think these challenges can be minimized?
17. How does your school respond on your job on portfolio?
18. What suggestions would like to give other language teachers for portfolio-based assessment?
19. How familiar are you with the concept of portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching?
20. What is your understanding of a portfolio in the context of education and language teaching?
21. In your opinion, what elements or types of student work should be included in a portfolio for English language assessment?
22. Who do you believe should be involved in the portfolio assessment process? Is it solely the teacher's responsibility or should students and parents also play a role?
23. Could you describe the types of student work you typically receive as part of their portfolios?
24. From your experience, do students generally enjoy working with portfolios? How do you gauge their level of engagement with this assessment approach?
25. How do you perceive students' attitudes towards being evaluated based on their portfolio submissions? Are there any noticeable trends or variations?
26. In your view, does the use of portfolio-based assessment influence students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning English? Can you provide examples to support your perspective?
27. What specific strategies or methods do you employ to encourage and support students in actively engaging with teaching and learning activities through the portfolio approach?

28. How do you assess students' performance and achievement through portfolio-based assessment? Could you share some insights into your evaluation process?
29. Do you believe that portfolio-based assessment is a reliable method for evaluating students' language skills and overall understanding? Why or why not?
30. Can you highlight any benefits or advantages you see in using portfolio-based assessment for collecting and assessing students' learning?
31. What challenges have you encountered when evaluating students based on portfolio submissions? How do you manage these challenges effectively?
32. How do you balance traditional assessment methods, such as tests and exams, with portfolio-based assessment in your teaching practice?
33. In your opinion, what role does portfolio-based assessment play in promoting 21st-century skills like creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication among your students?
34. Have you observed any changes in students' conceptual understanding and higher-order cognitive skills as a result of portfolio-based assessment compared to traditional testing methods?
35. How do you communicate the value and importance of portfolio-based assessment to your students and their parents or guardians?
36. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for improving the implementation of portfolio-based assessment in English language teaching, based on your experiences?

Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

Participant 1: Mr. Sunil Kumar Kharel

Date: Sep7, 2023

Location: Patalisadak,

Interviewer: Are you familiar with the concept of portfolio-based assessment?

Interviewer: A: Yes, I am familiar with it. If I keep portfolios to track students' performance, it's crucial for teachers, parents, and students to understand how their studies are progressing. Therefore, maintaining a record for each student is necessary, and I strongly support this idea.

Interviewer: How do you perceive portfolio-based assessment for teaching language?

Interviewer: A: Well., for both English and other subjects, it's essential to maintain portfolios for teaching and learning. Keeping portfolios for subjects other than English is equally important. In the context of the English subject, students engage in self-assessment to gauge their progress in listening, speaking, homework, project work, classwork, and class participation. I maintain portfolios in these areas to understand students' perceptions. It helps identify any challenges they face, whether self-imposed or with external assistance, allowing students to recognize areas for improvement. In my opinion, maintaining portfolios for every student is crucial to understanding their progress levels and pinpointing areas that need improvement.

Interviewer: In terms of portfolio evaluation, do you handle the maintenance yourself, or is it solely your responsibility, or should there be involvement from guardians and students?

Interviewer: From my perspective, maintaining portfolios is about documenting students' progress reports to fulfill the objective of progressing in their learning. If only the subject teacher handles it and students don't get a chance for self-assessment, the objectives of teaching for learning won't be met. It's crucial for students to be actively involved in self-assessment.

Guardians also play a role because learning achievement involves behavioral changes they might want to track. To fulfill curriculum objectives, students, guardians, and teachers all have vital roles. Students need self-recognition. For instance, a student might think that if they approach a task with a high level of curiosity, they'll be in level 4; if their participation is only moderately curious, they're in level 3, and so on. Whether it's in listening, reading, speaking, or writing, self-assessment and realization play a crucial role in determining their level. Both students and guardians need to be aware of self-assessment to enhance levels through this process. Relying solely on teachers for recording or maintaining portfolios isn't fruitful, possible, or authentic. Success in portfolio maintenance requires collaborative efforts from students, guardians, and teachers.

Interviewer: Q: Do students find satisfaction in maintaining the portfolio?

Interviewer: In my case, this academic year, the eighth-grade curriculum has been implemented across all schools. Having taught in the previous year, I understood the significance of this curriculum. I conducted research at home to identify the tools required for effective maintenance. This year, I adopted a rating scale of 5 for students who completed unit-wise tasks, assigning lower levels for lower marks. I explained this to my students. Using an Excel sheet, I recorded the names of students and their project work along with the corresponding rating scale. In the classroom, I brought my laptop, displayed the information on the smart board, and discussed it with the students. In my role as an interviewer, I listened to students' queries. Some students emailed their project work for entry, expressing their curiosity about the upcoming exams. Several emails were exchanged, with some students sending project work assessments through cyber or collaborative group efforts.

Interviewer: I appreciate your approach to project work in language subjects, involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and your use of a rating scale to assess various activities. Do you provide constructive feedback or inform students about the levels they achieve in different areas? Also, do you have sufficient time for portfolio maintenance?

Interviewer: The curriculum is organized systematically, and effective time management is crucial. Subject teachers are allocated time, and success is possible with proper time management. For instance, in a 45-minute speaking session, about 5-10 minutes are spent on attendance and other responsive tasks, leaving roughly 20 minutes for actual teaching. There is ample time for extracurricular and hidden curriculum activities. Despite these considerations, challenges arise for individuals. Personally, I have encountered challenges in finding time to conduct interviews and complete tasks. Even though I aspire to allocate time, the sheer number of students makes it challenging. Conversing for a few minutes with each student is essential for understanding their involvement, but the limited time poses a constraint. I have utilized the entire 45-minute time slot to the fullest.

Interviewer: Do students show progress with portfolio-based assessment for internal evaluation?

Interviewer: This is my first formal experience with this approach. Students understand that completing homework, projects, and demonstrating performance contributes to their assessment. They recognize that their active involvement in these tasks will lead to the assignment of grades during the evaluation process.

Interviewer: How do you balance teaching practice, portfolio-related assessments, examinations, and evaluations for internal assessments? What does the curriculum say about portfolios, and how do you compare previous and recent work?

Interviewer: In the past, the examination system solely determined students' scores, and their overall marks were calculated for result publication. Now, Terminal exams averaged 10% marks with the curriculum allocating 40 marks for internal assessments, including 4 for participation and 36 for various activities, teachers prepare a specific time slot for exams. It's challenging to manage within a 45-minute class, deciding whether to complete the course or focus on evaluation. Despite the effectiveness of the previous exam system and the recent internal assessment method, the curriculum places trust in teachers, allocating 40 marks, and believes it's

an improvement. However, successful implementation of portfolios still requires teacher support, beyond just training.

Interviewer Q: In the context of maintaining portfolios within a limited timeframe and the challenges faced in the absence of a defined schedule, how can collaboration between teachers, students, and parents be enhanced to ensure effective portfolio management?

Interviewee: Time is the main thing. It is challenging to maintain a portfolio together in 45 minutes when there is no defined time to do it. Cooperation from parents, including the administrative staff, is crucial in keeping students informed. Often, they only show up in the final hour, regardless of the presence of teachers. In the midst of this, students may lack comprehension of their actions and the necessary attention to navigate the new curriculum setup. While the curriculum is modern, the mindset remains traditional, hindering teachers from adapting. It is imperative for students to drive change within the school. Addressing issues, particularly those related to portfolio maintenance, requires collaboration between teachers and students. Providing students with copies of necessary files or papers can enhance the process. Although the school provides teachers with laptops, the absence of relevant applications poses a challenge. Beyond merely having a laptop for record-keeping, teachers should receive training in both software and time management, taking approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Allocating a separate period for these tasks is essential, ensuring that records are updated promptly, despite the challenges posed by the unique and complex Friday routine structure.

Interviewer: Considering the challenges in implementing internal assessments alongside exams, how has the absence of a designated time slot impacted the maintenance and effectiveness of portfolio-based assessments within the current system?

Interviewee: There is currently no designated time for internal assessment during terminal exam hours. Continuous evaluation is essential to decide whether to proceed with the lesson or focus on maintaining portfolios. The challenge lies not in conducting exams, which is relatively easy for teachers, but in implementing internal assessments for students' achievement. It is beneficial to follow the roadmap of internal evaluation, allocating 36 marks for various activities and 4

marks for participation, totaling 40 marks. Proper implementation requires training for teachers on when and how to conduct assessments. It's crucial not only to provide training but also to ensure teachers apply this knowledge in the field at the right time. Without a well-defined time, slot, teachers may find it challenging to balance the demands of exams, internal assessments, and teaching in the classroom. This has been observed in practice.

Pandemic adjustment:

During the pandemic, teachers were instructed to think about the possible strategies to run the class and their evaluation. Following the instruction, I started searching the ways out and found portfolio making one of the simplest ways to assess students even in pandemic time. I started maintaining individual records emerged as a crucial aspect, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach to assessment.

Annex 2: Data Transcription Report

Annex: 3: Data Transcription with Coding and Theme

Title: Teachers' Perception and Practices of Portfolio-Based Assessment
Informal Discussion on 20/07/2024 3:25 pm……49:24 minute
All the conversation was done in the mother tongue, recorded on mobile, transcribed, and translated into English language.

Data Coding

Name	Response	Code	Categories	Theme
Sushil	Familiar with portfolio-based assessment, supports the idea of maintaining records for students' progress.	Portfolio-Based Assessment, Record-Keeping	Introduction, Support for Assessment	Introduction and Support for Assessment
	Portfolios essential for teaching and learning in all subjects, including English. Students engage in self-assessment to gauge progress.	Importance of Portfolios, Self-Assessment	Teaching Methodology, Self-Assessment	Portfolios and Self-Assessment
	Involvement of students and guardians crucial for effective portfolio maintenance. Collaborative effort needed for authentic assessment.	Involvement of Students and Guardians	Collaboration in Portfolio Maintenance	Collaboration in Portfolio Maintenance
	Implemented a rating scale for project work assessment in English. Used Excel for record-keeping, involved students in the process.	Rating Scale, Project Work Assessment	Assessment Methodology, Student Involvement	Rating Scale and Student Involvement
	Challenges in time management for portfolio maintenance. Limited time poses constraints despite efforts to utilize it effectively.	Time Management, Constraints	Challenges in Portfolio Maintenance	Time Management and Constraints
	Students understand the importance of active involvement in tasks for assessment. Recognize that performance contributes to grades.	Student Perception, Performance Contribution	Student Understanding of Assessment	Student Perception and Performance Contribution
	Difficulty in balancing teaching practice, assessments, and exams within the curriculum. Challenges in managing time effectively.	Balancing Teaching Practice, Assessments, and Exams	Challenges in Curriculum Implementation	Balancing Practice and Assessments
	Collaboration between teachers, students, and parents essential for effective portfolio management. Challenges in the absence of a defined schedule.	Collaboration, Challenges in Portfolio Management	Collaboration and Challenges	Collaboration and Challenges
	Impact of absence of designated time slot on portfolio maintenance and effectiveness. Challenges in implementing internal assessments alongside exams.	Impact of Absence of Time Slot, Challenges in Implementation	Challenges in Assessment Implementation	Impact of Absence of Time Slot and Challenges

Title: Teachers' Perception and Practices of Portfolio-based Assessment
Informal Discussion on 06/02/2024 11:52 am……34:50 minute
All the conversation was done in the mother tongue, recorded on mobile, transcribed, and translated into English language.

Data Coding Preeti (Name change)

Response	Code		Theme
I teach in public schools. I work as a primary, third-class teacher. I have taken both primary and basic-level classes. In primary school, I teach English and math.	Teaching Experience, Subjects Taught	Introduction, Teaching Background	Introduction and Teaching Background
Masters in Economics. One year of B.Ed. Major subjects: Economics and Math.	Education Background	Qualifications	Education Background
The evaluation system in the school lacks proper record-keeping. Homework, exams, personality, and discipline are considered, but there's no systematic record-keeping.	Evaluation System, Record-Keeping	School Evaluation System	Evaluation System and Record-Keeping
Exams vary between three and four, depending on the situation. Lack of proper training for teachers regarding new curriculums is a challenge.	Exam Structure, Teacher Training, New Curriculum	Curriculum Implementation	Exam Structure, Teacher Training, Curriculum Implementation
Portfolio management training was lacking, leading to theoretical understanding but limited practical application.	Portfolio Management, Training	Portfolio Implementation	Portfolio Management and Training
Learning achievement should be the main focus, with rubrics based on topic and work. Remedial classes have shown improvement in student achievement.	Learning Achievement, Rubrics, Remedial Classes	Portfolio Evaluation, Remedial Teaching	Learning Achievement and Portfolio Evaluation
Limited resources hinder proper documentation and assessment. Lack of time and materials are major challenges.	Resource Constraints, Time Management	Challenges in Portfolio Assessment	Resource Constraints and Time Management
Red ink marking on portfolios is more effective for student motivation. Students actively engage and self-assess their progress. Lack of time and materials remain challenges.	Assessment Method, Student Engagement, Challenges	Portfolio Evaluation, Student Engagement	Assessment Method and Student Engagement
The current evaluation system focuses more on continuous learning rather than final exams. Students are more self-aware and motivated.	Evaluation System, Continuous Learning, Student Perception	Evaluation System and Student Perception	Evaluation System and Student Perception
Use of interactive methods like acting out vocabulary words improves student engagement. Documentation of reading and writing is easier than speaking and listening.	Teaching Methods, Interactive Learning, Documentation	Teaching Methods and Documentation	Teaching Methods and Documentation
Portfolio content includes reading and writing records, while speaking and listening are more challenging to document. Students self-assess and compare portfolios.	Portfolio Content, Student Self-Assessment	Portfolio Content and Self-Assessment	Portfolio Content and Student Self-Assessment
Students are motivated to improve their levels and document their best work in portfolios. Teacher feedback and peer comparison contribute to motivation.	Student Motivation, Portfolio Documentation	Student Motivation and Portfolio Documentation	Student Motivation and Portfolio Documentation
Challenges include student regularity, time constraints, and lack of materials. Coordination with administration and support for teachers can minimize challenges.	Challenges in Portfolio Assessment, Support Needed	Challenges and Support	Challenges and Support
School support has improved, but logistical challenges remain. Coordination between teachers and administration is essential.	School Support, Logistical Challenges	School Support and Challenges	School Support and Challenges

Annex 4: Comprehensive Record Form