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THE USE OF TEACHING PORTFOLIOS BY  
SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THAILAND

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*Caves and caves ventured*

*Candles and torches shared*

*Quenched and beguiled I staggered*

*Faith and grace bestowed I endeavored*

Linchong, *On seeing the light at the end of the tunnel*

June 5, 2005

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of portfolios as a part of the mandated quality assurance requirements by teachers in secondary schools in Thailand and their impact on the teachers' beliefs about their practices in teaching and learning. The study was guided by the following questions:

1. In what ways do the teachers use and develop their portfolios?
2. How do the teachers perceive the use of portfolios?
3. What is the impact of the portfolio development process on the teachers' beliefs about their practices in relation to teaching and learning?

A mixed research method was employed to answer these questions. As a result of two pilot studies, a survey was conducted in ten public secondary schools in nine educational service areas in the Central District of Thailand (Bangkok). The sample size of the study was 485 teachers, recruited according to a purposeful sampling technique on a voluntary basis with the condition that they must have at least completed their first teaching portfolios by the academic year 2002.

To complement the survey, qualitative methods, which included in-depth interviews and portfolio analysis, were conducted with a group of 9 teachers from 3 schools with either high, moderate and low average scores on perceptions of portfolios as tools and portfolio impacts. After the interviews, their teaching portfolios were analyzed as evidence of their beliefs about their practices in relation to teaching and learning. Responses from the survey, interviews and review of documents were analyzed and processed and the results were presented in both quantitative and qualitative forms which include tables of statistical analysis results, narrative and descriptive texts and quotations.

Findings from the study revealed that the majority of participants developed their portfolios to fulfill the quality assurance requirements by the Ministry of Education and the performance assessment requirements of their schools. Though the portfolio formats varied, the contents of most portfolio included personal data and work-related

documents. In regards to their portfolio construction process, most participants agreed that the over loadings of work and additional responsibilities were major constraints, and collaboration among peers was the most helpful factor. Clear guidelines and instructions from the schools would help them to create better portfolios.

Approximately 55% of the participants agreed that they expected to learn about and improve their teaching from their portfolio experiences and approximately 45% agreed that teaching portfolios are appropriate tools for teachers' professional development and performance assessment. About half of the participants agreed that developing portfolios helped them to improve their teaching and had an impact on their teaching practices. In addition, further investigations suggest that there was a correlation between the participants' perceptions of portfolios as tools and their perceptions of portfolio impacts and expectations of their portfolio projects. The results of this study are significant, not only for education policy makers and those who must implement educational policy, but for principals and classroom teachers. The findings of the study reveal that though teachers in general do object to the mandated change policy in relation to the use of teaching portfolios as a part of the quality assurance scheme, there are still doubts, uncertainty and questions among them when it comes to the implementation.

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