



The Use of the Portfolio Assessment Criteria Checklist for Teachers (PACCT) by Teachers of Students with Intellectual Disability in Saudi Arabia

Dr. Kholood Mohammed Aljaser*

kaljaser@ksu.edu.sa

Abstract

This study focuses on how female special education teachers implement portfolio assessment for students with intellectual disabilities using the Portfolio Assessment Criteria Checklist for Teachers (PACCT). Data were collected through an online questionnaire used to identify a sample aligned with the study's objectives, in addition to semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed two distinct approaches to portfolio use: portfolios as an administrative documentation tool and portfolios as a reflective formative assessment tool. Teachers who used portfolios reflectively demonstrated higher levels of organization and provided ongoing feedback. In contrast, teachers showed limited awareness of the PACCT criteria, both in terms of theoretical understanding and practical application in portfolio design and implementation, which contributed to variability in practice quality and assessment criteria. Furthermore, despite challenges related to family involvement, teachers employed alternative strategies to enhance communication with parents through portfolios. The study highlights the need for clear school-based policies grounded in rigorous standards, as well as targeted professional development programs, to strengthen the educational value of formative portfolio assessment in special education.

Keywords: *Formative assessment, Portfolio assessment, Portfolio Assessment Checklist Criteria for Teachers, Intellectual disability, Parental involvement*

/

* Assistant Professor of Special Education, Department of Special Education, College of Education, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia.

Cite this article as: Aljaser, Kholood Mohammed. (2026) The Use of the Portfolio Assessment Criteria Checklist for Teachers (PACCT) by Teachers of Students with Intellectual Disability in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Arts for Psychological & Educational Studies* 8(1) 632-648

© This material is published under the license of Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0), which allows the user to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. It also allows adapting, transforming or adding to the material for any purpose, even commercially, as long as such modifications are highlighted and the material is credited to its author.



استخدام قائمة معايير تقييم المحفظة للمعلمين (PACCT) من قبل معلمات الطالبات ذوات الإعاقة الفكرية في المملكة العربية السعودية

د.خلود محمد الجاسر*

kaljaser@ksu.edu.sa

المخلص

تركز هذه الدراسة على كيفية تطبيق معلمات التربية الخاصة لتقييم المحفظة (ملفات الإنجاز) لدى الطالبات ذوات الإعاقة الفكرية باستخدام قائمة معايير تقييم المحفظة للمعلمين (PACCT)، وذلك من خلال استبيان إلكتروني استُخدم لتحديد عينة متسقة مع هدف الدراسة، إلى جانب إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة. كشفت النتائج عن وجود نهجين متميزين لاستخدام المحافظ: الأول بوصفها أداة توثيق إدارية، والثاني بوصفها أداة تقييم تكويني تأملية. وقد أظهرت المعلمات اللاتي استخدمن المحافظ كأداة تأملية مستوى أعلى من التنظيم، مع تقديم تغذية راجعة مستمرة. في المقابل، بيّنت النتائج ضعف وعي المعلمات بمعايير PACCT، سواء على المستوى النظري أو في التطبيق العملي عند تصميم المحافظ وتنفيذها، مما أسهم في تباين جودة الممارسات وتحديد معايير التقييم. كما أظهرت النتائج أنه، على الرغم من التحديات المرتبطة بمشاركة الأسرة، لجأت المعلمات إلى استخدام أساليب بديلة لتعزيز التواصل مع أولياء الأمور من خلال المحافظ. وتؤكد الدراسة الحاجة إلى سياسات مدرسية واضحة قائمة على معايير دقيقة، إضافة إلى برامج تدريب مهني مستهدفة، لتعزيز القيمة التعليمية للتقييم التكويني القائم على المحافظ في مجال التربية الخاصة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التقييم التكويني، تقييم المحفظة، قائمة معايير تقييم المحفظة للمعلمين، الإعاقة الفكرية، مشاركة الوالدين.

* أستاذ التربية الخاصة المساعد، قسم التربية الخاصة، كلية التربية، جامعة الملك سعود، المملكة العربية السعودية

للاقتباس: الجاسر، خلود محمد. (2026). دراسة استخدام قائمة معايير تقييم المحفظة للمعلمين (PACCT) لدى معلمات الطالبات ذوات الإعاقات الفكرية في المملكة العربية السعودية، 8(1)، 632-648.

© نُشر هذا البحث وفقاً لشروط الرخصة Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)، التي تسمح بنسخ البحث وتوزيعه ونقله بأي شكل من الأشكال، كما تسمح بتكييف البحث أو تحويله أو الإضافة إليه لأي غرض كان، بما في ذلك الأغراض التجارية، شريطة نسبة العمل إلى صاحبه مع بيان أي تعديلات أُجريت عليه.



1. Introduction

In special education (SE), assessment is integral to teaching and learning processes. These integrated processes enable SE teachers (SETs) to adjust their teaching strategies according to individual students' needs, rendering assessment an effective tool for improving learning quality rather than merely measuring it. Greenwood and Kelly (2017) explained that good teaching is not limited to transferring knowledge or delivering educational activities; instead, it is based on an integrated cycle that begins with planning, proceeds through implementation, and ends with evaluation, which guides each learning stage for students with disabilities. Ysseldyke et al. (2023) described assessment as a fundamental component of a teacher's work; teachers must utilize the results to improve the educational process. Additionally, it is a systematic and ongoing process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data regarding student learning and outcomes, thereby functioning as an objective reference for decision-making. McLoughlin et al. (2018) demonstrated that assessment in SE is an ongoing process of gathering information concerning a student's strengths and weaknesses to guide individualized instruction that facilitates the holistic development of their cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Thus, assessment in SE is integral to the teaching and learning processes that enable SETs to adjust their instructional strategies to fulfill individual students' needs. Consequently, selecting effective learning tools—rather than mere measurement instruments—is important. From this perspective, portfolios represent a formative assessment tool using which students' work can be collected and tracked over time. They reflect students' actual abilities and progress and provide targeted feedback that helps teachers enhance individual learning and promote the holistic development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills (Greenwood & Kelly, 2017; Ysseldyke et al., 2023).

Several studies have observed that portfolios offer a comprehensive, individualized assessment of students' learning, capturing academic progress, functional skills, and social-emotional development (Klein-Ezell & Ezell, 2005; Kurniawan & Khukmi, 2023). They allow SETs to monitor growth over time, adjust instruction to satisfy individual needs, and involve students in self-reflection and goal-setting (Rosenstein & Renzaglia, 2013). Moreover, they enable easy documentation, sharing, and collaboration between SETs and families (Simons, 2019). Carothers and Taylor (2003) noted that portfolios showcase students' progress through authentic work samples, capturing subtle skill development and mastery. Further, they function as tools for self-assessment and reflection while providing valuable information for educators and employers to understand and foster students' ongoing growth. Deeba et al. (2023) highlighted that portfolios facilitate effective communication with parents as well as authentic, project-based learning. They offer learners with disabilities meaningful engagement, self-assessment, and reflection opportunities while involving parents as active partners in the learning process. Hobbs (1993) underscored several benefits of portfolio use for



students with learning disabilities. Portfolios communicate students' academic progress, learning styles, and areas in need of teacher–parent support. Additionally, they document changes in learners' self-perceptions, track skill development through teacher observations, and help identify diverse abilities and strengths demonstrated through meaningful activities. According to Rabinowitz et al. (2008), portfolios utilized to assess performance can be effectively tailored to fulfill the requirements of learners with significant intellectual disability (ID). Portfolios increase opportunities to demonstrate the learning of students with disabilities. Black (2010) recommended using digital transition portfolios in teaching critical self-advocacy abilities to learners with disabilities to enhance their motivation and involvement in learning, offer them experiences corresponding to what others learn, and encourage individual accountability. Laarhoven-Myers et al. (2014) argued that portfolio assessment enables teachers to establish a result-based evaluation system that reflects non-standard progress and objectives for students with disabilities. Portfolios enable students with disabilities to voice their goals and hopes and actively participate in their knowledge acquisition journey and intellectual development.

Despite this potential, local ID classrooms remain limited, particularly concerning how SETs implement portfolios in their classrooms and how these practices engage parents. This study explored SETs' portfolio assessment practices and the extent to which they are employed to foster parent participation in ID classrooms. Theoretically, this study sought to fill the gap in the current portfolio assessment literature by linking internationally recognized models to local contexts. It analyzed the concepts and applications of portfolio assessments for students with ID in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), using the Portfolio Assessment Criteria for Teachers (PACCT) framework, as well as strategies for enhancing parental involvement in monitoring and evaluating their children's learning. From a practical standpoint, the study provides strong evidence for decision-makers and administrators by proposing a local model for professional development that enhances formative assessment's effectiveness and improves the quality of education provided to students with special needs. The research questions are listed as follows:

- What is the understanding of educational portfolios held by SETs of students with ID?
- Do SETs employ portfolios aligned with the PACCT framework for students with ID?
- What methods do teachers utilize to enhance parental involvement in monitoring and evaluating children's learning through portfolios?

2. Methodology

This study involved three phases. In *Phase One*, data were collected using a questionnaire created based on the aforementioned research objectives to select a suitable sample for this study. According to Rutberg and Boukidis (2018), obtaining an overall picture that clarifies the research issue and paves the way



for the study's qualitative component is crucial. Additionally, qualitative research enhances the selection of an appropriate sample to align with the research objectives. While the target population proved useful because it had characteristics consistent with the study's overall objectives, qualitative analysis allowed an in-depth examination of the issue, fostering a meaningful exploration and understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). The questionnaire—administered online—aimed to gather first-hand data on portfolio use. The questionnaire comprised two main sections as follows: While section one covered demographic and academic information, section two gathered information regarding the assessment used. In *Phase Two*, SETs (females) who use the portfolio to assess their students with a total of 16 SET were identified and contacted to coordinate suitable times for interviews. During these communications, the overall objective of the study was explained, along with the nature of their required participation, including their role in providing information about their experiences using the portfolio, its challenges. In *Phase Three*, semi-structured interviews were conducted using the Interview Guide (see Appendix 1) were conducted to investigate their perspectives, whether they satisfied the portfolio criteria, and other issues associated with the study's first research question.

For data analysis, the interview data were qualitatively analyzed using thematic analysis to explore participants' perspectives in greater depth and identify patterns that would help extract meaning and support the study's conclusions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). This analysis helped in extracting the underlying meanings behind their practices, and in interpreting the results in a way that contributes to building a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. Regarding ethical considerations, I followed the 2014 King Saud University Research Ethics Policy for data collection, storage, and management of participants' personal information. First, the confidentiality of participant information was safeguarded, and they were assured that their data would not be disclosed to third parties. Second, a low level of conflict of interest was maintained when conducting the study to ensure that my opinions did not influence the outcomes. Finally, respondent anonymity was achieved by assigning each participant a primary identification number. Four elements of trustworthiness—namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—were incorporated into the semi-structured interview process (Riege, 2003). To ensure the study's credibility, key concepts were defined procedurally after an in-depth study, audio recordings were reviewed, and direct quotations were utilized to ensure the findings' validity. To ensure reliability, the research methodology was reviewed, and necessary modifications were made during data collection. Two pilot interviews were conducted to develop the study tool and improve my data collection skills. To ensure generalizability, participants were selected purposively and representatively, while interim notes were recorded to facilitate a deeper understanding of each interview. To enhance reliability, the study relied on



recorded interviews, rephrased questions, and multiple reviews of the original data. Continuous contact with specialists was maintained to verify the validity of the interpretations and findings.

3. Results and Discussion

The interview results revealed several themes and sub-themes reflecting the different aspects of these practices, including: teachers' conceptual knowledge of portfolios, their motivations for using them, data organization and portfolio construction mechanisms, and methods used to promote parental involvement.

T1: Portfolio Concept

The interviews revealed two different approaches regarding teachers' understanding of portfolio assessment. The first group demonstrated an understanding of portfolios as an assessment tool. For example, one SET stated, *"Portfolio is a method that relies on collecting samples of a student's work in an organized and documented manner to reflect their performance level."* Another SET stated, *"I understand a portfolio as a file containing samples of a student's work as a record to represent their learning and progress in various areas."* Another SET expressed, *"I see it as based on storing tangible evidence of a student's educational activities in their own file."* The second group viewed the portfolio as a mere file or documentation tool without reference to its direct assessment role. For example, one SET said, *"It is a file wherein we organize a student's papers and activities throughout the year."* Another SET stated, *"It is a folder used to keep the student's activities as a reference for parent or supervision view."*

The interview results revealed that SETs held three main perspectives on portfolio assessment. First, some viewed the portfolio as a form of "reflective performance," a vehicle for reflective thinking that documents a student's learning and development. This aligns with Paulson et al. (1991), who asserted that a portfolio represents a tool for documenting self-reflection and illustrating learning over time. Second, others viewed the portfolio as a "learning record," used to systematically collect samples of a student's work to track their academic progress. This is consistent with Arter and Spandel's (1992) definition of a portfolio as an intentional collection of student work demonstrating effort, progress, and achievement in multiple areas. Third, some saw the portfolio as "tangible evidence of learning," used to document factual evidence of student performance in various learning situations, which aligns with Valencia's (1990) view of the portfolio as a reliable source of actual evidence of learning and performance in the classroom.

The latter group is more likely to work with portfolios at the end of the academic year—a procedural rather than formative approach. They regard the portfolio as a storage file or administrative document for storing and managing records of activities, reflecting an understanding closer to it being a record of work rather than a tool for assessing performance and learning outcomes, which aligns with Valencia's (1990) findings that in situations characterized by a poor pedagogical understanding of the purpose of assessment,



portfolios are typically employed as work files rather than reflective learning tools. Ezell and Klein (2003) noted the same trend in classrooms, wherein portfolios were not regularly utilized as vehicles for reflection or formative assessment but were limited to administrative and documentary functions. This finding supports Greenwood and Kelly's (2017) view that a poor professional understanding of the purpose of assessment results in assessment tools, such as portfolios, being used for formal tasks related to compliance with institutional requirements, rather than to enhance individual learning.

A comparison of the two groups reveals a clear conceptual gap. Teachers' theoretical knowledge is a crucial factor in designing and implementing learning portfolios. The degree of conceptual clarity surrounding the portfolio's purpose largely determines the assessment's effectiveness. Teachers who understand that the portfolio is an assessment tool to support the learning of students with disabilities—and not simply a means of compiling their work—can better select appropriate content, organize it systematically, and track students' progress in a manner that reflects their actual growth, as demonstrated by this study's findings. This conceptual awareness enhances the assessment's credibility and ensures its connection to real educational goals, rendering the portfolio a means to improve and develop individual learning (Greenwood & Kelly, 2017), rather than a mere formality that ensures administrative compliance.

T2: Reason for Choosing Portfolio Assessment

The interviews revealed that SETs had varied reasons for choosing to use portfolio assessment in teaching students with ID. For example, one SET said, *"I chose the portfolio because it helps me track each student's progress individually when I want to check their own aims...allows me to see each student's strengths and weaknesses."* Another SET stated, *"I use the portfolio because it collects all of a student's work in one place for easy review...throughout the school year."* Another SET said, *"I chose the portfolio because it allows me to assess a student's skills at different stages, not just on a single day."* Finally, one SET stated, *"I like using the portfolio because it clearly displays a student's progress and allows parents to see what the student is accomplishing and participate in their evaluation."*

These reasons reflect diverse motivations. First, enhancing transparency and engagement allows parents and teachers to see student progress and participate in the assessment process clearly and tangibly. Second, tracking student progress individually helps identify strengths and weaknesses. Third, documenting and saving work enables the collection of all work and activities in one place, making them easy to access and review later. Finally, SETs expressed that portfolios support evaluating learning at different stages, which allows teachers to assess student growth at multiple stages rather than relying on a single test. This was also reflected in a previous study on the use of portfolio assessment in SE, wherein the researchers demonstrated that portfolios help document personal progress and facilitate reflection at various levels of learning (Clancy &



Gardner, 2017). Ezell and Klein (2003) and Conderman (2003) found that portfolios helped teachers store, organize, and retrieve student work, which, in turn, enabled them to monitor and track student performance over time. Rosenstein and Renzaglia (2013) observed that portfolios offer a comprehensive picture of the learning process by incorporating quantitative data and qualitative reflection, which facilitates the decision-making process in teachers' instructional practice.

All SETs in this study, even teachers with a lack of clarity on the use of portfolios as assessment tools, perceived portfolios as assessment documents and a means of communication that improves the school-home relationship. This has also been observed in other studies, such as Clancy and Gardner (2017) and Simons (2019), who found that portfolios improve collaboration between educators and families. However, the present data indicate that parental involvement in the KSA context functions as a major motivator for SETs to implement and maintain portfolio practices. In this study, SETs frequently described using portfolios to illustrate students' progress and share concrete evidence of learning with parents, generally to build trust and promote family engagement. Portfolios extended beyond a mere assessment function and assumed a communicative function as a tool for dialogue, transparency, and shared responsibility for student development.

T3: Content and Organization

During the interviews, teachers provided samples of students' portfolios, showing the content and organization. The data indicated two groups. One group demonstrated poor organization and an emphasis on administrative documentation. These teachers limited their portfolio to the first page and student information, focusing primarily on documenting work for administrative purposes without clearly organizing the content or educational divisions of the portfolio and without prior planning for what would be included. The other group, exhibiting better organization and greater focus on content, indicated that they organized their portfolios systematically, including clear divisions for each unit and incorporating student work, notes, and feedback—facilitating the monitoring of student progress. If the portfolio contains all student work divided by unit or skills, along with notes and comments on each assignment, teachers did not collect all the worksheets—only tasks that were appropriate to keep and contributed to forming a clear picture of each student's level.

This difference in portfolio organization aligns with previous findings, as the purpose of assessment directly affects portfolio quality through teachers' knowledge of it. SETs who view portfolios primarily as administrative documents collect student work in an unorganized manner, resulting in a lack of continuity in the evidence of learning. By contrast, SETs who view portfolios as formative assessment tools based on clear learning objectives regard them as more than simply a collection of work. They carefully organize portfolio content based on learning outcomes and select and structure content in a manner that effectively reflects



student progress and facilitates the educational process, thereby enhancing its reliability and pedagogical effectiveness. Likewise, in this study, SETs with superior organizational structures demonstrated a better understanding of portfolio content's role in providing continuous feedback and had greater confidence in demonstrating the individual learning of students with ID—consistent with Rosenstein and Renzaglia (2013) and Paulson et al. (1991), who suggested that clarity regarding the purpose of assessment is key to the depth of reflection and quality of student documentation. Ezell and Klein (2003) argued that portfolios make sense only when the content choices are based on a well-established pedagogical strategy linked to learning outcomes.

T4: Applying PACCT Standards

During the interviews, teachers were presented with the criteria for portfolio assessment (Ezell & Klein, 2002 & Kline-Ezell & Ezell, 2025) and asked to explain the extent to which they applied these criteria to their students' portfolios. The data revealed that none of the SETs applied all criteria in practice—whether owing to a lack of awareness of the 14 PACCT criteria, time constraints, or the perception that some criteria were difficult for students with ID. This indicates that teachers did not take advantage of all of the benefits and uses of portfolios. These findings are similar to those of other researchers, who stated that portfolio assessment is not employed as a transformative learning strategy but rather as an underutilized tool that lacks well-organized institutional structures and training (Clancy & Gardner, 2017; Ezell & Klein, 2003).

The criteria for portfolio assessment are as follows: C1: Does the teacher have a specific purpose for collecting portfolio pieces? A clear, objective criterion defines what the student is expected to learn or achieve, facilitating the assessment process and making the results more transparent. Ignoring this criterion fosters ambiguity in assessment and difficulty in accurately measuring student progress; students and teachers may become unfocused and lose the educational benefits. C2: If the portfolio has more than one purpose, do these purposes conflict with each other? This implies that when more than one purpose exists, they should be compatible so that they do not influence each other. Ignoring these criteria will cause confusion between students and teachers and may result in inaccurate or contradictory assessments. C3: Does the teacher allow students to select the work that best represents their skills or efforts? Student participation in work selection enhances student ownership of the portfolio and motivates them to improve their performance. Ignoring this will make the assessment less representative of the students' abilities, and students may feel less actively engaged in learning. C4: Does the portfolio include both work-in-progress and finished work? Including work-in-progress reflects the learning progression and processes a student is undergoing. This implies that by ignoring it, the teacher loses the opportunity to track student development, and the assessment is limited to final results only. C5: Does the portfolio contain dated work samples from different periods that demonstrate



growth? That is, dating the work helps document progress over time. Ignoring this aspect renders it difficult to measure student development and identify areas where additional support is required. C6: Are students involved in self-reflection? Self-reflection enhances students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and encourages them to set personal goals. This means that by ignoring it, students lose the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills and take responsibility for learning. C7: Do students' portfolio contents extend beyond what is included in their cumulative files? A portfolio should reflect new or different work that reflects varied skills and concepts rather than a mere copy of routine files, providing no additional information regarding student growth. C8: Does the portfolio include varied student work? Variety demonstrates a range of skills and abilities such as writing, practical projects, and art. By ignoring this aspect, the assessment may provide a limited and incomplete picture of students' abilities. C9: Does the teacher utilize portfolio assessment as a tool to reflect on modifying classroom instruction? Portfolios help teachers identify what students need support and development in their education. By ignoring this, teachers miss the opportunity to improve their teaching strategies based on students' needs. C10: Does the teacher meet the students to set goals collaboratively? Student participation in goal-setting enhances student commitment and improves learning. If these criteria ignore goals, they may be unrealistic or unmotivating for students, and their sense of ownership over their learning may be diminished. C11: Are student-teacher conferences held to track goals? Regular meetings help review progress and adjust goals as needed. If they are ignored, students may lose ongoing guidance and support, rendering their progress difficult to assess accurately. C12: Are students involved in assessing their work samples and progress toward set goals? Self-assessment enhances students' awareness of their performance and encourages them to improve their skills. When this is ignored, students' awareness of their performance diminishes, and the portfolio becomes merely an external assessment tool that does not promote self-learning. C13: Are the portfolio tasks authentic? Work should reflect real-life tasks or apply to real-life situations. If this is ignored, the portfolio becomes merely a theoretical exercise, diminishing its educational value and the application of skills. Finally, C14: Does the teacher work with students to develop and/or seek agreement on the criteria for evaluating their work? Participating in the setting of criteria enhances the clarity of expectations and fairness of assessment. If this is ignored, students may perceive the assessment as unfair or ambiguous, and the portfolio may lose credibility as an assessment tool.

Interestingly, the interviews uncovered additional important criteria, which are significant because they enhance the achievement file's effectiveness as an educational and assessment tool. An example is organizing and presenting the file systematically. Ezell & Klien (2002) and Kline-Ezell & Ezell (2025) addressed the content but did not emphasize organizing the file logically and clearly—such as including an



index, introduction, and student (Barrett, 2007). Although Ezell & Klien (2002) and Kline-Ezell & Ezell (2025) touched upon goal-setting and meetings, he did not explicitly mention the importance of providing ongoing feedback or opportunities for adjustment and improvement (Paulson et al., 1991). Another criterion is the use of technology and employment of electronic portfolios. The Ezell & Klien (2002) and Kline-Ezell & Ezell (2025) model does not include digital files or multimedia, such as video, images, or audio, which have become essential for interaction, accessibility (Yang et al., 2017), and connection to students' futures or transitional goals. Ezell & Klien (2002) and Kline-Ezell & Ezell (2025) discussed goal-setting but did not explain how the achievement profile could be connected to future learning plans, career goals, or transitional goals—an aspect that is especially important for students with disabilities (Glor-Scheib & Telthorster, 2006). Regarding the participation of parties other than the teacher and student, Ezell & Klien (2002) and Kline-Ezell & Ezell (2025) did not mention the role of parents, peers, or the educational support team, even though their involvement promotes communication and shared responsibility (Clancy & Gardner, 2017).

T4: Role of Portfolios in Enhancing School–Parent Interaction

As explained above, the interviews revealed that all SETs were aware of the role of portfolios in enhancing school–parent interaction; however, the nature of implementation differed between the two main groups. The first group, who constituted the majority, exhibited a regular implementation; these teachers recognized the importance of portfolios as a communication tool and worked to update them periodically, allowing parents to continuously monitor student progress and participate in the learning process. For example, one SET stated, *“Through the portfolio, parents can see their child’s work and participate in discussions about their progress.”* Another SET said, *“The portfolio makes communication with parents clearer, as they can monitor the student’s learning and daily activities.”*

The other group of SETs exhibited delayed implementation. These teachers recognized the importance of portfolios for communicating with parents. However, they did not send portfolios to parents regularly owing to parents' lack of awareness of the importance of portfolios, which may diminish interest or foster neglect. Additionally, the size of portfolios may make transferring them impractical. Other reasons included a lack of clear instructions or policies from the school regarding the mechanism for sharing portfolios with families and the fear that portfolios would get lost or misplaced. This is similar to other studies, such as Ezell and Klein (2003), which identified the following problems: excessive workload, unstructured school policies, and lack of parental awareness. These issues also result in a lack of clear institutional structures that weaken the sustainability of portfolio practices. Clancy and Gardner (2017) indicated that in the case of inconsistent parental follow-up or irregularity in sharing portfolios, the possibility of engaging in collaborative reflection and continuous feedback is diminished.



Regarding the methods that SETs use to enhance parental involvement in monitoring and evaluating their children's learning through portfolios, SETs rely on alternative means of communication (e.g., WhatsApp) to send pictures instead of sending the portfolio itself. They hold short virtual or video interviews using Zoom or Teams meetings to show parents students' portfolios, discuss them, or send small portions of the file. Some prepare brief reports highlighting students' most prominent skills and learning progress, providing a general overview of the file's content without requiring the full file to be submitted or relying on a brief viewing when parents pick up their children.

These alternative methods may affect primary portfolio performance. When only selected portions of the portfolio are sent (images and selected samples), parents may not obtain a comprehensive picture of the student's progress, reducing their ability to fully assess it. Moreover, sending images or videos of work without accompanying comments or analyses diminishes the portfolio's value as a formative learning tool. Quickly viewing images or summaries does not always encourage parents to think critically or provide constructive feedback to the student. However, based on what the teachers reported, increasing family engagement and awareness of their children's progress has some positive effects. Students are motivated to perform at their best and actively participate in activities when they know that their work will be shared with their parents on an ongoing basis.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the conceptualizations and uses of portfolio assessment involving students with ID in KSA, and how the practice facilitates parental involvement. The results revealed that teachers' conceptualizations of portfolios are highly heterogeneous; they may think of portfolios as an administrative record-keeping process and/or an active tool of formative assessment and reflection. Teachers with a more conceptually clear image employed portfolios to place the direction of instruction into context, record individualized progress, and involve families in common learning. Conversely, educators with weak theoretical knowledge were more likely to use portfolios as a compliance and documentation tool, which limited their pedagogical capabilities. The professional development gap highlighted by this conceptual gap is critical and requires professional development that emphasizes the pedagogical intent of portfolios and their role in teaching and learning cycles.

Further, it was observed that the teachers' motivation to implement portfolio assessment was highly associated with how practical they perceived it to be in documenting student development, measuring progress over time, and increasing transparency to parents. Nevertheless, problems concerning the irregular structure, lack of awareness regarding PACCT standards, and varying degrees of involvement in work with parents limited the overall effect. Additionally, SETs recognized that portfolios can enhance the working



relationship between parents and schools; however, owing to systematic obstacles, alternative methods had to be utilized to enhance parent—school participation through portfolios.

Based on these observations, several recommendations are provided. Recommendations for SETs include encouraging self-learning and enhancing conceptual understanding of portfolios by distinguishing between their administrative and pedagogical uses, ensuring their use as a formative assessment and learning reflection tool, and benefiting from diversifying the parental engagement methods mentioned above in monitoring portfolios while maintaining their primary educational function. Recommendations for school administration include establishing clear policies and guidelines that define the mechanisms for designing, managing, and sharing portfolios with parents; ensuring standardized practices; facilitating follow-up; and allocating time within the school schedule to manage and review portfolios as part of the formative assessment process, rather than as an additional task for teachers. This can be achieved by enhancing collaboration between SETs and parents through regular meetings wherein portfolio samples are presented and ways to support students are discussed. Recommendations for decision-makers include designing professional development programs based on each school's assessment of their current use of achievement portfolios, using the PACCT criteria, and focusing on how to improve the learning of students with ID. Finally, the exchange of experiences between schools via digital professional platforms must be encouraged to showcase successful practices in using achievement portfolios in SE, as this study presents models worth sharing.

References

- Arter, J. A., & Spandel, V. (1992). Using portfolios of student work in instruction and assessment. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 11(1), 36–44.
- Black, J. (2010). Digital transition portfolios for secondary students with disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 46(2), 118–124.
- Barrett, H. C. (2007). Researching electronic portfolios and learner engagement: The REFLECT Initiative. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(6), 436–449.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Carothers, D. E., & Taylor, R. L. (2003). The use of portfolios for students with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 18(2), 125–128.
- Clancy, M., & Gardner, J. (2017). Using digital portfolios to develop non-traditional domains in special education settings. *International Journal of ePortfolio*, 7(1), 93–100.



- Conderman, G. (2003). Using portfolios in undergraduate special education teacher education programs. *Preventing School Failure, 47*(3), 106–111.
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Education.
- Deeba, F., Ahmad, S., & Rehman, S. (2023). Portfolio assessment as a tool to enhance reflective learning and formative evaluation in teacher education. *International Journal of Education and Practice, 11*(2), 45–57.
- Ezell, D. L., & Klein, C. (2002). The portfolio assessment criteria checklist for teachers. *Florida Educational Leadership, 2*(2), 38–42.
- Ezell, D. L., & Klein, C. (2003). *Impact of portfolio assessment on locus of control of students with and without disabilities. Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 38*(2), 220–228.
- Glor-Scheib, S., & Telthorster, L. (2006). Transition portfolios: Connecting school to career for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 29*(2), 56–69.
- Greenwood, J., & Kelly, C. (2017). Implementing cycles of Assess, Plan, Do, Review: A literature review of practitioner perspectives. *British Journal of Special Education, 44*(4), 394–410.
- Hobbs, R. (1993). Portfolio use in a learning disabilities resource room. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 9*(3), 249–261.
- King Saud University research ethics policy. (2014). In *Ethical guidelines for conducting research involving human participants*. King Saud University.
- Klein-Ezell, C., & Ezell, D. (2005). Use of portfolio assessment with students with cognitive disabilities/mental retardation. *Assessment for Effective Intervention, 30*(4), 15–23.
- Kurniawan, R., & Khukmi, K. (2023). Digital portfolio assessment: A self-reflection way for teachers and special needs students. *Journal of ICSAR, 7*(2), 230–240.
- Laarhoven-Myers, T., Laarhoven, T. R., & Zurita, L. (2014). Using electronic portfolios to assess professional competencies in special education teacher preparation. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 37*(1), 49–62.
- McLoughlin, J., Lewis, R., & Kritikos, E. (2018). *Assessing students with special needs* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Paulson, F. L., Paulson, P. R., & Meyer, C. A. (1991). What makes a portfolio a portfolio? *Educational Leadership, 48*(5), 60–63.
- Rabinowitz, S., Sato, M., Case, B., Benitez, D., & Jordan, A. (2008). *Alternate assessments for special education students in the Southwest Region states*. National Center on Educational Outcomes.



- Riege, A. M. (2003). Validity and reliability tests in case study research: A literature review with “hands-on” applications for each research phase. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 6(2), 75–86.
- Rosenstein, A., & Renzaglia, A. (2013). Portfolio assessment: Practices in special education teacher preparation programs. *Journal of Special Education Teacher Preparation*, 28(3), 45–57.
- Rutberg, S., & Bouikidis, C. D. (2018). Focusing on the fundamentals: A simplistic differentiation between qualitative and quantitative research. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, 45(2), 209–213.
- Simons, D. (2019). *A case study of teacher perspective on digital portfolios in comparison of general and special education students* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Concordia University.
- Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 15(3), 398–405.
- Valencia, S. W. (1990). A portfolio approach to classroom reading assessment: The whys, whats, and hows. *The Reading Teacher*, 43(5), 338–340.
- Yang, M., Wang, T., & Lim, C. P. (2017). E-portfolios as digital assessment tools in higher education. *Learning, Design, and Technology*, 1–23.
- Ysseldyke, J. E., Chaparro, E. A., & VanDerHeyden, A. M. (2023). *Assessment in special and inclusive education* (Fourteenth edition). PRO-ED, An International Publisher.

Appendices

Appendix (1): Interview Questions Guide

Teacher No. () School: Student Portfolio: Date:

.....

Main questions	Example of the Follow-up questions	Notes during the interview	Notes after the interview
1. What is your personal understanding of assessment?	How did this change occur, and what factors motivated it?		
2. Why do you find informal assessment useful?	Why do you consider it an informal		



3. Do the assessment strategies and methods you currently use differ from those you used earlier in your professional career?
assessment method?
What did you learn about your students?
What did you learn about the activity itself? Would you use it again, and why?
What challenges do you face in using the portfolio as an assessment tool?
4. Describe to me what is portfolio?
assessment method?
5. What was the reason that led you to choose the portfolio as an assessment tool?
How has portfolio assessment helped in communication with parents?
6. Are the Portfolio assessment methods help parent-teacher relationships?
What is the role of a parent in using portfolio assessment for ID children?
7. Does the application of the Portfolio provide a more effective assessment method for ID children?
for ID children?
8. Do you usually use the criteria checklist when administering the portfolio?

Questions through the PACCT	Example of the Follow-up questions	Notes during the interview	Notes after the interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The First Step ● The Second Step ● The Third Step ● The Fourth Step ● The Fifth Step ● The Sixth Step ● The Seventh Step ● The Eighth Step ● The Ninth Step ● The Tenth Step ● The Eleventh Step ● The Twelfth Step ● The Thirteenth Step ● The Fourteenth Step 	<p>How do you implement the <i>first step</i> in practice?</p> <p>What challenges do you face in applying the <i>first step</i>?</p> <p>How effective do you find the <i>first step</i> in achieving its intended goal?</p> <p>Do you believe the <i>first step</i> is necessary?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which of these steps do you find most effective, and why? ● Are there any steps you would modify or omit? 	

