

**Prompts, Required Components
and Scoring Rubrics for the**

Professional Portfolio for Candidates & Beginning Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Portfolio and Why Do Teachers Create Them?

The term “portfolio” is one of the most commonly-used buzz words in the education profession today. Some of the people most likely to use portfolios are undergraduate education majors, candidates engaged in clinical practice, new teachers, tenured teachers, and higher education faculty.

- Professional portfolios are maintained by teacher candidates to document teaching skills and experiences
- Candidates engaged in clinical practice update their portfolios to prepare themselves for those crucial first interviews
- New teachers keep lesson plans, evaluations, and communication documents in portfolios to show their organization, growth, and readiness for tenure
- Tenured teachers wishing to be NBPTS certified “master teachers” will include artifacts of postgraduate work accomplished, diversity of students taught, peer evaluations, letters of recommendation by parents and students, and copies of outstanding lesson plans and samples of student work following those plans
- Finally, university level educators will wish to document their achievements, such as dissertations, publications, awards, speaking engagements, evaluations, and advanced course work as they pursue full professorships.

Constantino and DeLorenzo (1998) explored the value of developing and using of portfolios. They identified eight attributes which make creating a professional portfolio a worthwhile endeavor for beginning and experienced teachers.

- Portfolios facilitate the development of reflective thinking
- Portfolios present a holistic view of teachers’ achievements
- Portfolios provide an ongoing record of teaching accomplishments
- Portfolios place the responsibility on teachers to develop and plan professional goals
- Portfolios correlate with national and state initiatives toward performance-based assessment
- Portfolios may be used to document and validate teaching accomplishments
- Portfolios may be used to assess pre-service and in-service teacher performance
- Portfolios enhance job searches and interview processes

As you can see, portfolio maintenance is developmental and ongoing—one may even consider it to be a major component of being a professional educator.

Why Should You Create a Portfolio?

A portfolio is more than just a scrapbook or a collection of your best teaching efforts; rather, a portfolio is a demonstration of your professional growth and improvement as a teacher (Farris 1999). Your Professional Education Faculty have chosen to require a professional portfolio as an integral part of their unit assessment system for three principal reasons:

- portfolios benefit you personally as a professional teacher
- portfolios give prospective employers valuable information about you and your abilities
- portfolios help you develop and articulate your personal philosophies and theories of education

How Portfolios Benefit You as a Teacher

As you complete your course credits, hours of study, and years of experience in college and in your pre-service teaching endeavors, you are accumulating an ongoing vast array of outstanding examples of your growth as a professional educator. You will collect papers of which you are particularly proud, glowing narrative descriptions of your first time in front of a group of students and critical but encouraging evaluations from your supervisors. Most importantly, you will have documentation that you possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become an effective teacher and a lifelong learner.

Another reason to maintain a portfolio is to keep records of those wonderful projects, bulletin boards, learning centers, and thematic units you've created. As the years fly by, memories of those unique creations will fade and you'll find yourself wishing you had kept copies of them to adapt for future students. You may be an experienced educator who wishes to teach in a different area and could finally use all those projects you learned about and created, but never got a chance to pursue when you were an undergraduate. Or you may be taking postgraduate courses and would like to refer to all those wonderful activities you implemented when you completed your clinical practice.

Finally, professional teaching portfolios offer opportunities for reflection. Reflection is the ability and disposition to think deeply and make decisions about what professional strategy is appropriate at any given time (Arends, 1998). We educators often get so swept up in the hectic world of teaching that we forget to stop and think about how our lessons turned out, or how we feel about the day's events. Maintaining a portfolio gives you the opportunity to develop the healthy habit of reflecting on the success (or failure) of a lesson. Saving student work that shows how you wanted the lesson to turn out validates you and reminds you why it worked. On the other hand, saving student work that shows how the lesson failed miserably provides valuable input as well. You can learn from your mistakes and chuckle ruefully as you come across the unfortunate samples years later. Either way, you are taking the time to consider the effects of your efforts—isn't that what we always wish for our students to do?

How Portfolios Benefit Your Prospective Employers

Employers who are seeking new teachers are in precarious positions. They must rely on subjective evaluations such as interviews, letters of recommendation from strangers, and the word—perhaps reliable, perhaps not—of those being interviewed. The opportunity to view and reflect upon a professional portfolio gives prospective employers the chance to affirm or discredit their intuitions with hard facts. The professional teaching portfolio eliminates any doubt and reinforces the recommendations given by you and your personal references. While employers may not have time or the opportunity to examine each and every portfolio that comes their way, they may have certain criteria in mind as they skim through the artifacts. Since your portfolio is in digital format, you can immediately pull out a certain section to showcase as the topic arises in the interview.

Employers must weed out the sincere from the false, the knowledgeable from the vague, and the actual best qualified from the best-worded applicants. Portfolios provide authentic assessment of an educator's skills, accomplishments, and teaching philosophy. Portfolios may include glowing letters of thanks from parents or students, awards from the school or community, and certificates of additional course work achieved. These artifacts compiled with complimentary letters of reference and moving personal statements all give employers a fair representation of exactly whom they're considering.

How Portfolios Help You Express Your Philosophy and Theories of Education

Whether you realize it or not, you have already developed beliefs and philosophies regarding the processes of teaching and learning. There are instinctive answers to age-old questions regarding the purpose of schools and the best ways to teach, and the knowledgeable teacher realizes the importance of those philosophies. When you are aware of your points of view, you may speak more eloquently to issues of curriculum, classroom management, parental involvement, and the rights of both teachers and students. However, bear in mind that as you gain experiences in your profession and in life in general, your philosophies of education may change.

As you apply for and interview for jobs, you will find that employers often ask either in person or on the applications for your philosophies of teaching. How do you plan to make a difference? Why do you wish to be a teacher? Having an answer ready for these questions shows that you are making an intentional decision to become an educator. Recognizing that your beliefs may change demonstrates your willingness to grow and be a lifelong learner.

Why Create a Digital Portfolio?

A recent advancement in the field of portfolio development is the innovative Digital Portfolio describe by Wiedmer (1998) as "a purposeful collection of work, captured by electronic means, and stored in a digital format, that serves as an exhibit of individual efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas." Digital portfolios may be presented using the World Wide Web or stored on DVDs or CD-ROMs. Unlike hard copy portfolios, digital portfolios may be made interactive through the use of hyperlinks, and/or video and sound.

According to Wiedmer, digital portfolios reflect the depth of involvement of the individual in both selection and design. Additionally, digital portfolios with their ability to transmit vivid images with sight and sound can more accurately capture and transmit in attention-getting ways the personality of the candidate. Another benefit of digital portfolios that should not be overlooked is almost obvious: if a presenter is using computers to generate a portfolio, then that presenter's aptitude for technological advancement must be current and also improving as new innovations in technology arrive. (Georgi & Crowe, 1998).

GETTING STARTED

Organizing Your Portfolio Around Professional Teaching Standards

Teaching is a complex and challenging activity that cannot be accurately described by any single set of goals, standards or job descriptions. However, before you can begin the process of demonstrating and documenting your professional growth through a portfolio, you will need some system of categories around which to organize your artifacts. Helen Barrett, an early proponent of electronic portfolios, maintains that a portfolio that does not address professional teaching standards is little more than a scrapbook of “teaching stuff.”

Because the SUU Professional Education Unit’s assessment plan includes plateaus of achievement (Expected Outcomes for Program Completers) you must prioritize your artifacts around a set of standards put forth by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). These standards were chosen because they have been adopted by the Utah State Office of Education as the basis for initial (Level I) teacher licensure.

Required, Self-Selected and Self-Generated Artifacts

Using the INTASC Standards, each of the ten standards must be addressed by providing documenting artifacts which demonstrate acquisition of knowledge, skills and dispositions. When corroborating mastery of each standard, include only pertinent documents that truly demonstrate expertise. Three types of artifacts may be included; (1) required artifacts, (2) self-selected artifacts, and (3) self-generated artifacts.

Required artifacts are those which are mandated by the portfolio protocol outlined below. At least one required artifact is specified for each of the ten standards and in many cases, required artifacts are the result of performance assessments conducted as course requirements for various professional education courses. A table which lists all required artifacts is included in APPENDIX A at the end of this document.

Self-selected artifacts are not required by the Portfolio Protocol but, as the category suggests, are artifacts you select from work you produce during your courses, field experiences and clinical practice or internship. For example, though the Teacher Work Sample is a separate document not included in the portfolio, you might choose to include the Assessment Plan you developed for it as evidence of mastering Standard 8 which addresses assessment strategies. As you progress through the Professional Education program, you will produce many additional artifacts connected with the various courses you complete. You may choose to include many of these artifacts as self-selected evidence of meeting program standards.

Self-generated artifacts are those you create specifically for inclusion in your portfolio to demonstrate mastery of a given standard. Self-generated artifacts are neither required by the Portfolio Protocol or produced as course performance assessments. You might, for example, take the initiative to write a reflection on what it means to be a reflective practitioner (Standard 9). This “reflection on reflection” might provide valuable insight into your ability to analyze your own professional teach-

Using INTASC Standards as a Framework for Your Portfolio

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) identifies ten standards that address what beginning teachers should know. Briefly, these components include:

1. Knowledge of subject matter
2. Knowledge of human development and learning
3. Adapting instruction for individual needs
4. Multiple instructional strategies
5. Classroom motivation and management
6. Communication skills
7. Instructional planning skills
8. Assessment of student learning
9. Professional commitment and responsibility
10. Partnerships

(Martin, 1999)

These ten INTASC Standards will provide the basic framework for organizing your artifacts. The outline below provides a list of the standards and examples of the types of evidence you might include in your portfolio to demonstrate mastery. This outline is not intended to be an exhaustive list; you may choose to include many artifacts not listed among the suggestions. The outline is intended only as a guide and should be modified to suit your own preferences and circumstances. One modification that you may wish to consider is to cross-reference the artifacts that address more than one standard. For example, lesson plans would be appropriate to include in several areas such as learning and human development, adapting instruction, motivation and classroom management, and planning. Another example is your participation in community events that benefit children, which may fit under the commitment, partnership, and communication standards. Since your portfolio is digital, it will be easy to provide multiple links that connect artifacts to various standards.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A PORTFOLIO BASED ON INTASC STANDARDS

- I. Standard: Knowledge of Subject
 - A. Record of Courses
 - B. Practicum/Clinical experience
 - C. Research papers
 - D. Certificates of completion of workshops
 - E. Summaries of related articles
 - F. Bibliography of related texts

- II. Standard: Learning and Human Development
 - A. Sample lesson plans created for a variety of age groups
 - B. Reflections on the difference between your 2nd grade clinical students and your grade clinical students
 - C. A bibliography of children's books with suggestions for age-appropriateness
 - D. Term paper comparing and contrasting the theories of renowned child psychologists

- III. Standard: Adapting Instruction
 - A. Group project completed in your inclusion class
 - B. Descriptions of curricular modifications you've tried and their outcomes
 - C. Reflection on the role you played in an SEP meeting
 - D. Letter from parents thanking you for the extra time you put into modifying the social studies test for their child with learning disabilities
 - E. Examples of how you make curriculum more challenging for students with gifted abilities
 - F. Narrative paper on your decision-making process when creating lesson plans to include students with English as a second language

- IV. Standard: Strategies
 - A. Video of you teaching a lesson
 - B. Self-evaluation identifying methods you've found success with and others that still need work
 - C. Narrative descriptions of the methods used by your cooperating teachers
 - D. Research project on the battles of controversy between experts in the field of classroom instruction
 - E. Rationale for changing cooperative learning groups before mid-semester

- V. Standard: Motivation and Classroom Management
 - A. Letters home updating parents on coming projects and homework
 - B. Examples of certificates you've created for achievements such as:
 - 1. improved behavior
 - 2. excellent effort
 - 3. all homework in on time for the month
 - 4. improved attendance
 - C. Copy of classroom assertive discipline plan, including:
 - 1. rules
 - 2. consequences
 - 3. student/teacher-generated reward system
 - 4. charts
 - D. Certificate of completion of special classroom management course, seminar, or workshop
 - E. Letters of appreciation from parents grateful for the extra effort you gave to their child with emotional or behavioral problems
 - F. Summaries of articles on classroom management and/or motivation

- VI. Standard: Communication Skills
 - A. Letter to parents introducing yourself as student teacher
 - B. Copies of minutes from team meetings showing your participation
 - C. Copies of position or persuasive papers you've written
 - D. Copies of group projects you've completed, demonstrating your ability to work in a group
 - E. Certificates of your technological abilities, including:
 - 1. word processing
 - 2. internet

3. database
4. spread sheets
5. web page with hyper links
6. digital cameras
7. scanners

- F. Address of your web site with hard copies of documents included there
- G. Samples of your best handwriting in a handwritten essay (many districts require this in their employment applications)
- H. A video (one minute or less) of you presenting a lesson to a class
- I. Powerpoint presentation of your philosophy of teaching

VII. Standard: Planning

- A. Copies of lesson plans from each subject and grade level you've worked with
- B. Copies of curriculum you've created
- C. Copies of group presentations you've team-taught in your courses
- D. A schedule of the entire school day from your clinical experience
- E. Examples of seating charts you've designed
- F. Scope and sequence of a unit you wish to teach

VIII. Standard: Assessment

- A. Copies of established informal assessment charts you've used, citing authors
- B. Copies of informal assessments you've created, including your rationale
- C. Copies of objective tests you've created
- D. Examples of how you modify assessments for students with special learning needs
- E. Skill inventories you've used or would like to use
- F. Learning modality inventories you've learned how to use
- G. Summaries of articles on multiple intelligences
- H. Papers you've written on multicultural issues in assessment

IX. Standard: Commitment

- A. Your statement of beliefs/philosophy of education
- B. Certificates of participation in community events
- C. Articles about your volunteer work with nonprofit groups
- D. Your resume, focusing on the time you've spent working with the school setting

X. Standard: Partnerships

- A. Documentation of the help you provided to coordinate a community volunteer drive for your local public school system
- B. Your written thoughts on a legislative session you attended in your state's capital when they discussed education issues
- C. Letters from your local legislators thanking you for meeting with them to discuss education issues
- D. Minutes from the school board meeting you attended to observe how their decision-making process works
- E. Letters from a parent/teacher organization thanking you for your help
- F. Letters you've written to local businesses suggesting ways that they can participate to help improve public education in your town

NBPTS and Other Professional Standards

Another national standards organization is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Created by the Carnegie Forum in the 1990s to recognize outstanding educators, the NBPTS identifies five core propositions, then also breaks these propositions down into standards and goals for each individual discipline. The five propositions are:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities. (NBPTS, 1999)

As you can see, these propositions are closely correlated to the INTASC Standards. As you enter service and continue to grow as a professional, you may want to consider organizing your professional portfolio around these principles as well. The Utah State Office of Education uses the NBPTS Board Certification as the basis for advanced (Level III) Certification.

Choosing Artifacts for Your Portfolio

As you begin to assemble your portfolio, you will gather artifacts that document your abilities in each of the ten INTASC Standards. However, Unit faculty and external reviewers who will evaluate your portfolio do not have a great deal of time to peruse your portfolio and are only interested in determining if you have met all standards. This means you must be selective in what you choose to include as evidence. Two or three carefully selected artifacts to support each standard should be sufficient. Include as self-selected/self generated artifacts only those that demonstrate your competencies relative to the standard in clear and compelling ways.

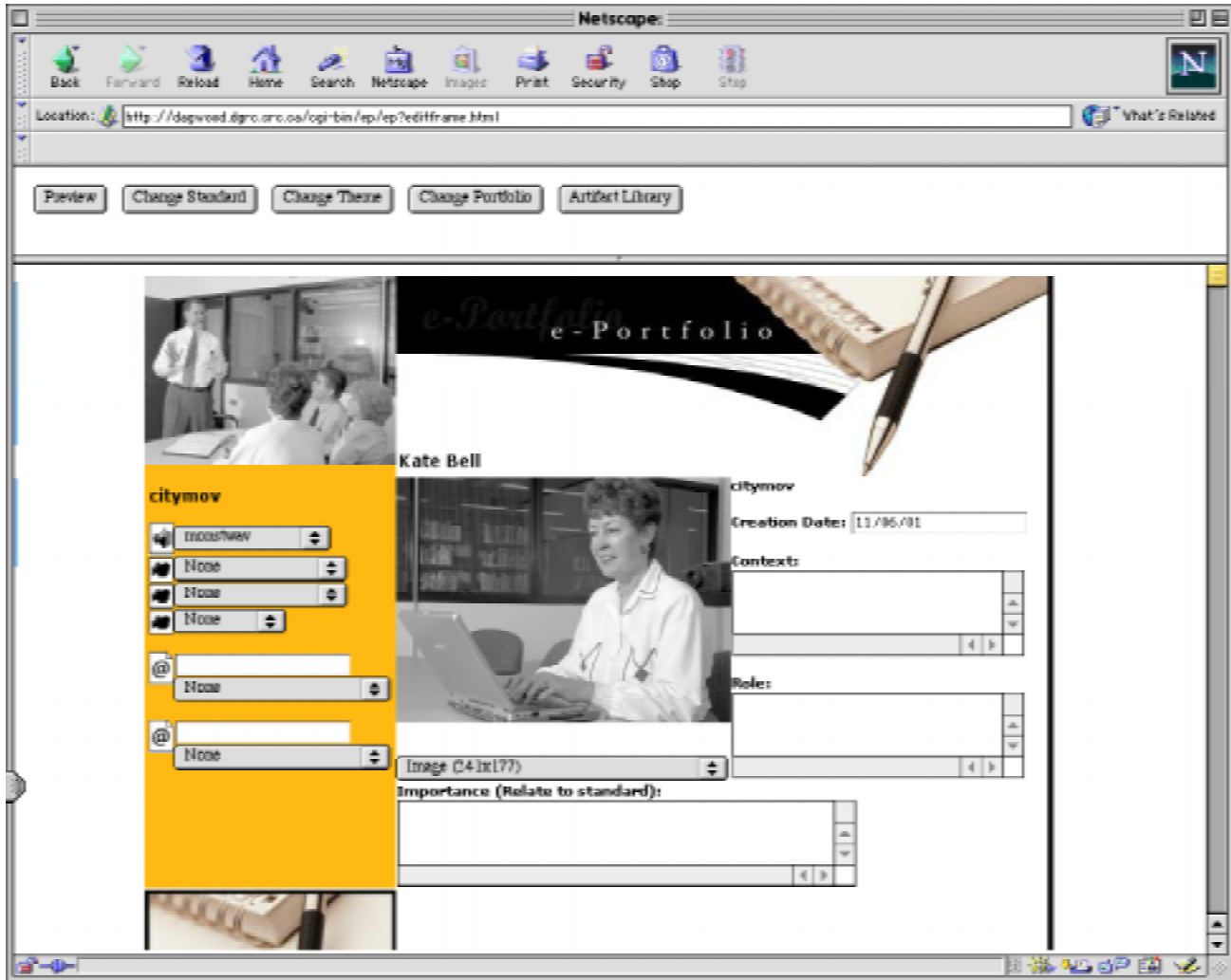
Writing a Rationale: Reflecting on the Artifact and Standard

In each section of your digital portfolio, you will insert various artifacts that document your proficiency and experience for that standard. Because readers of your portfolio will not necessarily know why you included them, you need to include a rationale for each artifact. In the spaces provided in the e-Portfolio template, type a brief statement explaining your justification for including this artifact in the portfolio for this particular standard. This statement should be no longer than a paragraph of two and should explain why this particular artifact was included. Your rationale should show the reader that you know what you are capable of doing in terms of meeting the standard. Be specific about showcasing your abilities. Do not simply summarize the document. When writing a rationale, answer these questions:

1. What? (What is the CONTEXT of the artifact? What is it? When and why was it produced?)
2. So What? (What is the ROLE of the artifact? Why did I select it as evidence for meeting this standard? What does it say about my growing competence as a teacher?)
3. Now What? (What is the IMPORTANCE of the artifact? How did producing the artifact help me improve my professional competence and what will I do to continue to improve relative to this standard?)

Figure 1.1 below shows the Artifact Reflection Template automatically created by e-Portfolio and the Context, Role and Importance fields in which you will type your reflections. It is critical that you complete these fields for each artifact as portfolio assessors have been trained not to consider artifacts for which reflections are missing.

Figure 1.1. e-Portfolio's Artifact Reflection Template



Mind the Gaps

Standards that are not well documented by your artifacts will become evident as you collect and categorize materials. Keep the standards in mind as you take other courses or participate in professional activities. Whenever you have assignment choices, such as journal article critiques to write or projects to complete in your university course work, think about the standards you need to work on. Any gaps that remain in your documentation can be addressed through self-generated artifacts. For example, Standard 9 addresses the teacher as a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally. You might choose to include as a self-generated artifact, a list of personal professional development goals that you have established for yourself as a result of your clinical practice experience.

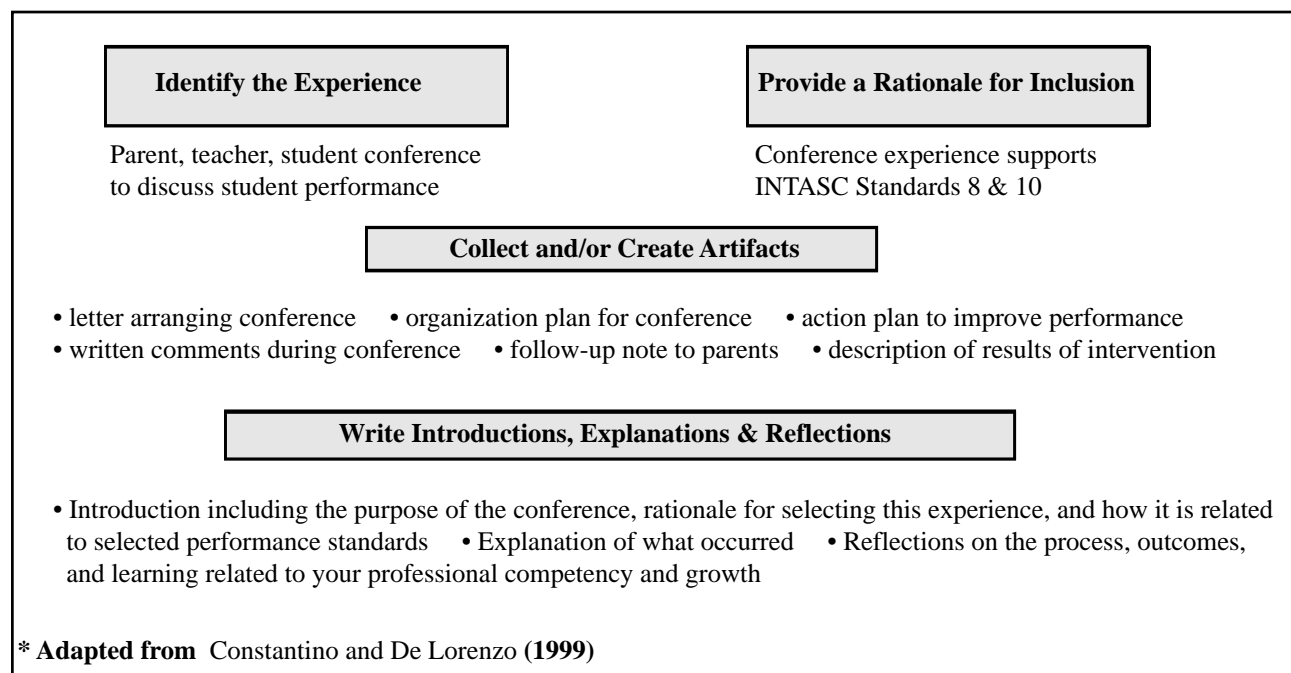
Turning Teaching Experiences into a Portfolio Entry

The majority of your experiences as a teacher could result in valuable portfolio artifacts related to professional teaching standards. In addition to experiences directly related to planning, delivering, and assessing instruction, be sure to consider other experiences that are also an essential part of the teaching role, such as conducting a parent teacher conference, organizing a field trip, directing a school play, or coordinating a special project. Most of these experiences can be critical learning and growth opportunities worthy of inclusion in a portfolio. Think through all the experiences that you have had and use the following guidelines, suggested by Constantino and De Lorenzo, to help you turn an experience into a portfolio entry.

- Identify the experience.
- Ask yourself why this experience is worthy of having a place in your portfolio.
 - Does it support the purpose of your portfolio?
 - Does it support a performance standard or theme?
 - Does it support your professional goals?
 - Did it contribute to your professional growth and learning?
 - Did it increase student achievement?
- Select or create artifacts that represent the experience.
- Make decisions about what to say in your introductions, explanations, and reflections to enhance your documents.
- Determine how to display the documents in your portfolio.

Figure 1.2 provides a model for including a teaching experience by citing how it supports INTASC Standard 10: Partnerships. The artifacts included can be actual documents that represent the preparation, implementation, and analysis of the parent teacher conference. The introduction, explanations, and reflections are narratives that provide critical information regarding the conference, its impact on student progress, parental response, and a reflection on the experience.

Figure 1.2 Self Generated Artifact Based on a Teaching Experience



Present Your Artifacts Professionally

Remember that your portfolio will represent you as a professional. You will want to ensure that the first impression it makes is a good one. Therefore, carefully consider everything that you choose to include. Listed below are some guidelines to follow as you begin to put your portfolio together.

1. Did I use correct spelling and standard English in all written artifacts?
2. Are my documents clear, legible, and meaningful?
3. Have I selected different ways to represent my experiences and competencies such as charts, photographs, student work, and my own original materials?
4. Have I included all required artifacts?
5. Have I included self-selected artifacts for each standard?
6. Are all of my artifacts relevant and directly related to the standard(s)?
7. Are all of my artifacts accompanied by introductions, explanations, and reflections?
8. Do my artifacts show significant evidence to support student learning and/or the results of my instruction?
9. Are all evaluations current and completed by professionals who have first-hand knowledge of my instruction?
10. Do my reflections provide evidence of my ability to think critically, problem solve, make decisions, relate theory to practice, learn from experience, and grow professionally?

Submitting your Portfolio for Evaluation

At several key points throughout the Professional Education Program you will be asked to submit your portfolio for assessment and evaluation. Specifically, your portfolio will be assessed at each of the formal checkpoints embedded into the Program (the beginning of Professional Studies, Instructional Studies, and Integrative Studies). Bear in mind that your portfolio will be viewed as a work in progress during each of these assessments. You will not be expected to submit a complete portfolio until near the end of the Integrative Studies portion of your program. The e-Portfolio users' manual included in this document provides instructions on submitting your portfolio for assessment. Please bear in mind that hard (printed) copies of portfolios will not be accepted after Spring 2003. In addition, hard copies submitted during Spring 2003 will not be returned to the candidate.

Addressing the INTASC Standards in Your Portfolio

In the section that follows, each of the ten INTASC standards is identified and explained. Before you begin selecting artifacts for a particular standard, you should read the explanation carefully and reflect on the experiences you have had which relate to the competencies it describes. Since the entire teacher preparation program at SUU is closely aligned to the INTASC standards, you should have no trouble identifying projects, assignments, and activities you have completed during courses and field experiences which could provide evidence of having met the conditions of the standard. Your challenge in completing the portfolio will be to select the best evidence available to demonstrate your professional competence. You should have at least two pieces of evidence for each of the ten standards but bear in mind that a single artifact may be used as evidence for more than one standard.

KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT MATTER

Standard One

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

Explanation of the Standard

Knowledge of subject matter is universally considered an essential attribute for effective teaching and successful learning. The most meaningful and lasting learning occurs when knowledge is constructed by individual students. The role of the teacher is to help learners build their own knowledge through acting on materials and engaging in meaningful experiences. To create these experiences, teachers must possess an in-depth understanding of major concepts, assumptions, debates, processes of inquiry, and ways of knowing that are central to the disciplines they teach.

Knowledge of subject matter also implies an understanding of inquiry used in various disciplines. Inquiry training lets students experience the same process actual scientists go through when attempting to explain a puzzling phenomenon. Employing methods such as inquiry training in the classroom allows teachers to engage learners in generating knowledge and testing hypotheses according to the methods of inquiry and standards of evidence used in the discipline.

In every classroom, it is critical that the teacher evaluate resources and curriculum materials for their comprehensiveness, accuracy, and usefulness for representing particular ideas and concepts. Subject matter knowledge would be essential for the selection and evaluation of curriculum materials and resources.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Standard Two

The teacher understands how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.

Explanation of the Standard

A teacher working with a particular group of children or adolescents quickly realizes how each individual is unique. Differing personalities, learning abilities, interests, and skills make clear the wide variation in students of approximately the same age. And yet, in spite of wide differences, common characteristics unite students within an age group. Thus, although children and adolescents grow and develop at different rates and with varied abilities, there are predictable patterns and sequences to their development.

Understanding these patterns, sequences, and stages of development is essential groundwork for a teacher making decisions about the content and methods of educating a group of students. Educational practice, to be effective, must be rooted in the rapidly advancing research and theory of human development and learning. Often such theory cannot be translated directly into teaching practice. However, when the teacher has a broad understanding of how people learn and develop, this knowledge can be useful in making logical hypotheses in how best to understand and thus respond to an individual student or group of students.

As teachers test their hypotheses in the classroom, they must carefully observe the responses of students and the effects of their curricular choices. Rather than “covering material,” teachers must evaluate the quality of the understanding of the content and the developmental appropriateness for the instructional strategies used. Thus, teachers gain knowledge from two sources about how students learn and develop: the fields of human development and psychology and their own observations of students and reflections about their teaching.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

ADAPTING INSTRUCTION FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS**Standard Three**

The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

Explanation of the Standard

There are broad differences in students and the skills they bring to the learning environment. These differences include varied learning styles, diverse cultural backgrounds, and exceptionality in learning. The effective teacher understands how children differ in their development and approaches to learning and is able to adapt strategies and environments to meet specific needs of children. Therefore, a major role of the teacher is to assess each student’s developmental levels and abilities in all areas and match learning environments and experiences appropriately. To fulfill this role, a teacher must be an astute observer of students and a professional who can use observational data to diagnose, guide, and instruct. Further, the teacher must design instruction that helps use students’ strengths as the basis for their growth. In this classroom, students are valued for their uniqueness and they learn to respect this in one another. The classroom environment then becomes a learning community in which individual differences are respected.

As students’ differences become clear, the teacher might adjust task assignments, time allowed, circumstances for work, and communication and response modes for individual students. In some instances, the teacher will participate in and assist other professionals in family-centered assessment and in the development and implementation of individualized plans for children with special developmental and learning needs.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

MULTIPLE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Standard Four

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

Explanation of the Standard

Teachers deal daily with many complexities, including differences among their students in terms of abilities, attitudes, and learning preferences. For these widely varying students, there are multiple goals and objectives to be met, including those dealing with content, basic skills, problem solving, attitudes, dispositions, and critical thinking skills, it is clear that no routine or "pet" teaching approach can effectively meet all of these needs. Effective teachers draw from a wide repertoire of instructional strategies and models, adjusting their choices to meet their intended objectives and the needs of particular students.

There are many instances in which the most efficient and effective way to teach certain kinds of knowledge is through expository teaching or teacher-directed, step-by-step learning. In such cases, direct instruction, presentations, and skills practice are appropriate. However, there are many other times when methods that appear time consuming yield the greatest results in the long run. When students are given the time and materials to be active investigators, they are able to construct a basic framework of knowledge within which to expand their understanding.

Learning for understanding often requires experimentation, problem solving, collaboration, and manipulation of physical objects. Therefore, teachers need models of teaching that include inquiry learning, cooperative learning, concept attainment, and class discussions. These models have as a goal the formation of cognitive structures including concepts, generalizations, dispositions, and understandings rather than simple attainment of specific facts or mastery of discrete skills. As teachers understand the wide variety of instructional strategies available, they will be better able to choose and combine them to integrate affective and cognitive development and to educate for understanding, both of content and of self.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

CLASSROOM MOTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Standard Five

The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Explanation of the Standard

Effective teachers work in many ways to build positive classroom interactions. These teachers recognize that involving students in this endeavor not only promotes growth in personal and social responsibility but also enhances the development of democratic and social values. Group rapport is enhanced as students and teachers work cooperatively to establish classroom norms and rules. Teaching and modeling effective problem-solving techniques such as conflict resolution provide motivation for learning, positive social interaction among children, and positive self-esteem for all. Thus, the effective teacher strives to create a learning community that fosters group decision making, collaboration, individual responsibility, and self-directed learning.

Teachers interested in building and sustaining a positive learning climate are aware of the range of behavioral phenomena confronting them. They recognize that there are situations in which the teacher will be confronted by students who are unable to function within the parameters established by the group. In these instances, teachers must rely upon their knowledge of the principles and strategies of behavior management and issues related to all aspects of motivation. As reflective practitioners, teachers use this knowledge of theory, along with their classroom experiences, to construct an ever-evolving student motivation and management philosophy. This philosophy is specific enough to guide classroom actions yet flexible enough to accommodate the individual needs of students. Therefore, effective classroom managers understand the need to be able to define problems, identify alternatives, choose a course of action and a plan for implementation, and consider the possible consequences of a given action.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Standard Six

The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Explanation of the Standard

Much of teaching is about sending and receiving messages. Carefully planned and skillfully delivered messages can issue invitations to students that school is a place to share ideas, investigate, create, and collaborate with others. School can be a place to be understood as well as a place to gain understanding. But without intentional considerations and planning, the messages actually received by the students can be conflicting, confusing, or discouraging. For this reason, teachers need to monitor their personal verbal and nonverbal communication so it is characterized by clarity, organization, enthusiasm, and sensitivity. Teachers' oral and written communications need to be models of appropriate grammar, content, and syntax. Effective teachers consistently use active listening skills as well.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING SKILLS

Standard Seven

The teacher plans instruction based on knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

Explanation of the Standard

An effective teacher plans learning experiences based on a set of diverse factors, each of which influences the outcome of student learning. First, the subject matter is considered. It is important that the teacher have a thorough knowledge of the composition of the subject being taught as well as an understanding of teaching methods that are unique to that subject. Second, the individual needs of learners are of utmost importance. Teachers need to be able to create short-range and long-term plans that are linked to student needs yet be ready to respond to unanticipated classroom events and adapt those plans to ensure student progress and motivation. Third, community needs and resources are a factor in planning lessons. Each community is unique in its citizens' consensus about what is important for its children to know. As public educators, teachers need to be sensitive to these beliefs and reflect on them when making plans. Fourth, curriculum goals are important. These goals give the teacher direction in making plans. Curriculum goals have a variety of sources: Many are provided by school districts and the local community; others are created by the teacher.

As teachers engage in both long-term and short-term planning, they must be flexible enough to consider these contexts: subject matter, local school district goals, current educational issues, legal issues, family and community considerations, public policies, and community resources. Tying all these together are the interests, needs, and aptitudes of each of the students being taught. While in the classroom, teachers need to be reflective of their current practice and be open to adjustments and revisions that become necessary in working with a diverse group of students.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Standard Eight

The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.

Explanation of Standard

The purpose of assessment is to assist students, teachers, schools, and parents in recognizing what students have learned and to identify areas in which students need improvement. Teachers gather, synthesize, and evaluate many different types of information about their students to make effective decisions about instruction.

Traditional assessment has been based on specific information that students acquire. Observations, tests on content, and standardized tests are examples of traditional evaluative measures that provide indicators that suggest learning has taken place. These traditional measures, however, may tell little about the depth of knowledge in relation to solving real-life problems. New approaches to assessment have tried to address this need by focusing on performance samples in which students demonstrate that they can perform a task such as giving a speech, playing an instrument, or writing a story. Some of these tasks are called alternative assessments because they take place in a contrived context. They are an improvised or created ‘alternative’ to a real-life problem-solving situation. In contrast, other performance tasks are authentic assessments because students demonstrate learning in a real-life setting. For example, a student might be asked to give a speech while running for school office. If the student wants to be elected, the speech must be convincing enough to accomplish this. This type of authentic assessment measures not only the student’s ability to effectively demonstrate skills or solve problems but also his or her ability to assume responsibility for directing his or her own learning. Because of the benefits of using a variety of assessment strategies, many teachers are helping students to organize their work samples into portfolios. This approach to assessment relies on work samples and performance tasks that reflect the academic growth of the student over time. A portfolio should include a variety of both authentic and alternative assessment samples.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Standard Nine

The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally.

Explanation of the Standard

A good teacher is one who has the ability to learn as much from the students as they learn from him or her. In an effort to match instruction to the needs of students, this teacher spends much time evaluating the implications of his or her teaching decisions in the classroom. This is the mark of a reflective practitioner. Such self-reflection leads to greater knowledge about the students, about the subject being taught, and about the act of teaching.

Self-reflection also takes place in considering the teacher's relationships with parents and educational professionals. The responsibilities of educators in a democratic society include that of working with a community of concerned individuals who rally around one central goal—educating children. Children learn much from their experiences within their families and the outside world. Recognizing these facts, the teacher must cultivate strong relationships with parents as well as with educational professionals, constantly reevaluating the effects of his or her decisions on all who are involved with the education of the students.

This constant evaluation of choices extends itself outside the classroom. Indeed, a teaching professional is one who has a need for continuing education. Certification is only the first step in a long process of continual development as a professional. Growing professionally means learning new ways to make lesson plans, understand subject matter more thoroughly, and manage a classroom, among hundreds of other skills. But true professionals need more than technical teaching skills. They must also have the ability to constantly self-evaluate and act critically. New ideas together with classroom experience form a stronger theoretical base from which the teacher works, allowing for more effective decision making in the classroom. Thus, it is crucial that teachers seek opportunities for professional growth and place new ideas within the theoretical framework that already exists in their classrooms.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:

PARTNERSHIPS

Standard Ten

The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

Explanation of the Standard

Effective teachers engage in a variety of experiences within and beyond the school that promote a spirit of collaboration, collegiality, and personal growth. They work in cooperative teams, endorse collegial efforts, and seek opportunities to work with parents and the community at large. These teachers recognize the importance of sharing experiences and ideas.

As teachers expand their realm of interactions, they recognize how cultural identity plays an important part in the way others react to the world, how they learn and how they view themselves. Community members and events can be powerful teachers of teachers. Effective teachers learn how to successfully use churches, civic, and community-based organizations as resources and as ways of motivating and encouraging positive growth in students. Exposure to these influences can assist teachers in understanding the frame of reference within which the community's children operate. Connecting the school and community requires that the teacher integrate multicultural education throughout the curriculum. Teachers must be receptive to moving beyond the walls of the school and opening the door to discover the students' other learning environments.

Required Artifacts:

One standard specific artifact selected from list of required Elementary/Secondary artifacts and one artifact self-selected or generated by the candidate.

Description of Self-Selected/Self-Generated Artifacts I Will Include:
