

Guidelines for the Development of Professional Teaching Portfolios

----- Aligned with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Principles

Introduction

Like other professionals, teachers need evidence of their growth and achievement over time. The professional teaching portfolio is a vehicle for collecting and presenting that evidence. For many of us, it's just practicing what we preach. We encourage our students to select examples of their work over time to demonstrate how much they've learned, and we must do the same. One benefit of developing a portfolio is the chance to reflect on our practice. And in that sense, portfolio development is an important growth experience. Also, the process allows us to collaborate with mentors and other colleagues.

Portfolios allow us to become reflective about what it is we do. And they allow us to document the practices we'd like to preserve and even pass on to others. "Portfolios have much to offer the teaching profession," writes Dr. Kenneth Wolf, of the University of Colorado. "When teachers carefully examine their own practices, those practices are likely to improve. The examples of accomplished practice that portfolios provide also can be studied and adapted for use in other classrooms." And it's more than just a good idea. In many places, teachers and administrators must now document their work with a portfolio to renew their professional licenses.

A professional teaching portfolio is a record of goals, growth, achievement, and professional attributes developed over time and in collaboration with others. A portfolio illustrates goals and development over time, and not simply at the highest level of achievement. For teachers, a professional teaching portfolio is a thoughtfully organized collection of artifacts that illustrates professional status, pedagogical expertise, subject matter knowledge, knowledge of learning processes, and professional and personal attributes that contribute to teaching. The professional portfolio itself is the product of, and cannot be separated from, the reflection and assessment processes required to produce it.

Throughout this guide, the term *professional teaching portfolio* is intended to connote a fusion of processes and product. Portfolio development involves the complex processes of self and collaborative evaluation. These include the somewhat cyclical processes of goal setting, reflecting upon growth, and recognizing achievement, followed by further goal setting to facilitate continued professional development. Portfolio development also requires decision-making and analysis concerning the selection and arrangement of the artifacts to be included as well as the development of presentation skills to facilitate communication concerning professional development.

Creating a professional portfolio involves considerable and careful effort — good teaching, so you have something to showcase in the first place; careful planning; thorough record keeping; thoughtful selections of items to include; and certainly a fair measure of creativity. Professional-development expert Doris Dillon compares a portfolio to a garden. “It takes planning and hard work, requires the weeding out of unnecessary elements, and promotes positive feelings. You should be proud to show it off!”

What is to be included in a Professional Teaching Portfolio?

The only simple answer to the question, “What should I include?” is, “it depends.” It depends upon the teacher, the purpose, and the audience. There are however, some observations that may serve as guidelines for choosing portfolio entries.

First, although portfolios vary in form and content, depending upon their purpose, Wolf points out that “most contain some *combination of teaching artifacts and written reflections*. These are the heart of the portfolio.”

Second, the artifacts, whether lesson plans, student work samples, or a parent newsletter, must be accompanied by *written reflective explanations*. For example, what was the purpose of the parent newsletter? Did it accomplish this purpose? What might you do differently next time? Be specific and be reflective. It's the intent and thoughtful evaluation that the artifacts should reveal.

Third, concerning choice and quantity, remember that portfolios are *representative not comprehensive*. That is, each artifact chosen for inclusion should represent at least one significant aspect of you and/or your teaching. At the same time, bear in mind that teaching is so complex that it is not possible to represent all aspects. In general, the first focus should be on representing goals and growth toward those goals and later, achievements.

Fourth, remember the purpose of the portfolio is *self and collaborative assessment and evaluation*. This implies a rather limited audience, at least during the initial stages of development. Artifacts chosen for inclusion should be meaningful first of all to the teacher, the primary audience, and second, to others who are involved.

The final point to keep in mind is that portfolios are forms of *dynamic assessment*. In other words, what is put in at any given time may be added to or deleted as is fitting to the teachers' professional development. It has been generally observed that portfolios become increasingly unique as student teachers progress through their teacher education program.

Organizing the Portfolio

The easiest and most attractive way to display your physical portfolio is to purchase a nice looking 3-ring binder that it at least 2-3” thick. D-ring style binders work better than the C-ring or O-ring styles. Choose one with a clear protector that allows you

to display an attractively created cover and/or side binding. Purchase a number of plastic document covers with three-ring holes (the kind that allows you to slip things in and out without having to three-hole punch the actual item). Also purchase attractive looking dividers with tabs that can be customized. You may also want to buy some three-ring punched photo display sheets.

Your purchases in hand, you now need to decide how to divide your portfolio in a way that will allow you to find what you need quickly and will allow prospective or current employers to thumb through a logical presentation. Print, type or neatly write your divider titles. Make copies of all the items you wish to include, unless you have good reason to use the original. Then you just need to slide your items into the protective covers and insert them into the binder in the correct places.

For purposes of evaluation and data collection, your portfolio will be an electronic product stored in your TaskStream account. It is strongly recommended that you develop a physical portfolio to accompany the online product. From my own experience, few schools will look at your collection unless you have it with you while participating in an interview.

General Guidelines for Organizing Professional Teaching Portfolios

The following guidelines are intended as tips for ease of assembly and effective organization. Most will apply to whatever general pattern of organization is followed.

1. For the physical portfolio, use a good quality, three-ring (D-style) binder. Choose a color that does not soil easily.
2. Include identification that includes name, address, and telephone number. Pictures are optional; don't use them gratuitously, but certainly include them if they speak to a point you wish to make. Remember that you should not include pictures of others who can be identified without their permission to do so – this includes students with whom you will have contact.
3. Choose specific features of your instructional program to document. Collect a wide range of artifacts, and date and annotate them so you have the information you need when making your final selections.
4. Place multiple-page or otherwise irregularly shaped entries in plastic sleeves or pockets. Do not damage any artifact in order to include it. For example, do not hole-punch a certificate, rather, put it in a plastic sleeve.
5. Remember that portfolios are representative, not comprehensive. For example, choose one or two representative notes from students: do not include all thirty cards received the day you left practicum! Make sure all entries are securely attached within the portfolio. Bulky artifacts should not be included. A picture may be substituted for real items.

6. Include a Table of Contents that identifies the overall organization of the portfolio. Indicate and label the sections clearly. This is especially important for the physical portfolio, since the electronic version will be organized by the existing DRF structure.
7. Within each section, and for each entry, include a Statement of Rationale.
8. If using journal entries, supervisors' observations, or other written documents as evidence, highlight the sentence or two on the page that directly applies to the point made in your accompanying rationale or reflection.
9. If using academic papers or other work as evidence of subject area knowledge, add a brief abstract of the paper to the cover page and insert the whole paper in a plastic sleeve.
10. Many teachers who engage in portfolio development include a videotape of teaching episodes recorded over time. The inclusion of such a videotape is optional.
11. In general, arrange your portfolio in a way that makes it easy for you and reviewers to identify the goals you set and your subsequent progress or achievement.
12. Collaborate with a mentor and other colleagues (preferably, those experienced in both teaching and portfolio construction). Meet regularly with colleagues to discuss your portfolio.
13. Assess the portfolio. You and your colleagues can assess the portfolio informally or submit it for formal evaluation. You are required to submit it for evaluation at various points in the program.
14. Remember that portfolios are dynamic. To facilitate easy changes, create word-processing files for your statements of rationale, reflections, and tables of contents, etc.
15. If questions or difficulties arise, ask faculty and colleagues for assistance. Similarly, if you have suggestions please share your ideas with others.
16. Work on the portfolio, both electronically and physically, incrementally. Your final product at each stage will suffer if you attempt to complete it hastily because of a looming deadline.

Professional Teaching Portfolio Suggested Organization

1. Creative cover page (physical product only)
2. Table of contents (physical product only)
3. Personal information
 - a. Resume
 - b. Autobiography
 - c. Personal philosophy of education
 - d. Teaching goals
4. Professional information
 - a. College transcript
 - b. Description of teaching experiences
 - c. List of professional activities
 - d. Letters of recommendation
 - e. Formal observations and evaluations
 - f. Awards and certificates
5. Sample unit/lesson plans
6. Divided sections aligned with the ten INTASC principles. Include evidence/artifacts to support knowledge and performance indicators. Provide rationale for including each piece of evidence.

Each artifact should be accompanied by a brief, identifying caption. Include, for example: title of the artifact; date produced; description of the context and purpose; evaluation, or other types of comments.

Note: A professional teaching portfolio is more than a hodge-podge of lesson plans and lists of professional activities. It is a careful record of specific accomplishments attained over an extended period of time.

INTASC Principles

INTASC principles were developed under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers, a consortium of 37 states dedicated to the basic idea that content knowledge should be joined with pedagogical understanding — if students are to learn, teachers must master these two areas. The INTASC approach requires that beginning teachers demonstrate entry-level competencies of teaching through the development of a portfolio.

The INTASC principles are performance-based assessments in which teachers describe what they know and can do once they have entered the profession and are linked to current views of what students should know and be able to do to meet K-12 standards for learning. INTASC principles are not rigid in design. They consider that teachers work in a wide array of circumstances and with diverse populations.

The states and programs that have adopted the INTASC principles have chosen to follow the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) assessment format — the portfolio. The INTASC core standards have been well received and are now broadly recognized as providing a useful framework for reforming many aspects of teacher education, licensing, and professional development.

Recommended Evidence/Artifacts for Professional Teaching Portfolios
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Principle 1: The student 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 to students. (**Content Knowledge**)

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Knowledge of Content	Lesson plans, web sites, course outlines in which content is explained Materials that demonstrate knowledge of content and skills Resource references in lesson plans and units Evidence of research
Use of Inter-disciplinary Approaches when Teaching Content (may connect to science, literature, writing, art, etc.)	Lesson plans that involve interdisciplinary approaches Student work examples that show interdisciplinary understanding References and comments from teachers in other disciplines
Develops, Selects and Uses Content to Encourage Diverse Perspectives	Use a variety of teaching materials, including technology Selection of material that appropriately portrays race, ethnicity and gender Journal reflections Video and audio tapes and analysis

Principle 2: The student teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.
(Human Development and Learning)

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Developmental Characteristics of Students	Observation notes, case studies, tutoring Adaptations of lesson plans and materials to meet student needs Journal reflections Video and audio tapes and analysis Assessment examples that record developments
Activates and Builds Upon Prior Knowledge and Experiences	Written lesson and unit plans Video and audio tapes and analysis Journal reflections Evidence of connection to real-life experiences Idea file of real world applications

Principle 3: The student teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adaptable to diverse learners.
(Diversity)

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Teaching to Individual Learning Abilities	Lesson plans indicating a variety of teaching strategies that address various learning styles, multiple intelligences Feedback from cooperating teacher, special needs teachers Journal entries Learning centers, enrichment activities Evidence of adaptations based upon students' IEPs
Selection of Resources to Meet Range of Individual Needs: Special Education to Gifted	Materials listed in lesson and unit plans Evidence of use of a variety of materials and visuals Visual displays Learning centers to challenge learners Samples of problem of the day or week exercises
Expectations for Learning and Achievement	Objectives in lesson and unit plans that are challenging and appropriate for diverse learners

Principle 4: The student teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. NOTE: *Instructional strategies include, but are not limited to, cooperative learning, small and large groups, lecture, project work, thematic instruction, partner learning, use of media resources, and technology.* **(Instructional Strategies)**

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Selecting Resources for General Instruction	Resource references in lesson plans and units Written rationale of why needed

Best Practices: Selects and Uses Multiple Teaching Strategies, Active Learning, Modeling	Video and audio tapes and analysis Evidence of addressing various learning styles and multiple intelligences in delivery of instruction Anecdotal observations and descriptions of instructional strategies
Student Teacher Role in Instructional Process	Journal reflections Video and audio tapes and analysis Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor

Principle 5: The student teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction in the classroom. **(Learning Environment)**

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Management of Transitions	Written transition plan Video and audio tapes and analysis Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor
Management of Time and Materials	Written description of procedures for handling materials Video and audio tapes and analysis Journal reflections Lesson plan with detailed time estimates for sections
Directions and Procedures	Written plan of procedures (from lesson plan) Video and audio tapes and analysis
Pacing	Video and audio tapes and analysis Journal reflections Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor
Performance of Non-Instructional Duties: attendance, lunch count, dist- ribution of papers, duties, etc.	Journal reflections Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor
Positive Climate for Intrinsic Motivation	Visual displays Written and visual description and analysis of classroom layout Video and audio tapes and analysis Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor
Establishing Expectations for Behavior	Description of behavior management plan Written behavior rules and policies Video and audio tapes and analysis Journal reflections Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor
Monitoring Student Behavior	Written description of positive student interaction Video and audio tapes and analysis Journal reflections

Response to Student Misbehavior	Documentation of individual behavior problems and responses Notes to parents Video and audio tapes and analysis Journal reflections Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor
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Principle 6: The student teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom. **(Communication)**

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Oral and Written Language	Video and audio tapes and analysis Handouts and other written materials given to students Student written and oral reports Written communication with staff, community and parents Feedback from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor
Quality of Questions	Evidence of divergent questioning in lesson plans Video and audio tapes and analysis Samples of student generated questions
Discussion Techniques with Student Participation	Video and audio tapes and analysis Anecdotal recording of student small group and class discussion Journal reflections
Use of Media and Technology: boards, charts, overhead projectors, computers (Internet, Power Point, Distance Learning, etc) as available	Resources listed in lesson and unit plans Documentation of the use of computers and technology in classroom or lab (showing integration of technology) Photos, transparencies, web sites Student-created images using technology

Principle 7: The student teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of the subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals. **(Planning for Instruction)**

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Purposeful Learning Activities Based on Learning Objectives and District Curriculum	References in lesson and unit planning
Short- and Long-Term Planning (including unit plans)	Planning charts or outlines Unit and lesson plans Evidence of checking for prior learning to determine learning activities Journal reflections
Lesson Plans: Monitoring and Adjustment	Extensions, enrichment, and/or remedial plans to augment lessons Video and audio tapes and analysis Journal reflections

Principle 8: The student teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner. **(Assessment)**

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Variety of Formal/Informal Assessment Strategies	Examples of student teacher created tests, quizzes, rubrics Self-evaluation questionnaires and rubrics Student journal entries used for assessment
Assessment Data Used in Lesson Planning/Adjustment	Pre- and post-tests used to analyze student learning Interpretations of assessment data and adjustments made based on objectives being met
Evaluates Criteria and Feedback	Student journals, work products Written comments on student work Rubrics and assessment criteria developed Journal reflections on assessment decisions
Recording and Monitoring Assessment Data	Evidence of regular assessment Evidence of record-keeping (grade book, charts, etc.)

Principle 9: The student teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally. **(Reflection and Professional Growth)**

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Reflection on Teaching (written journal and conversations)	Journal reflections Analysis and reflection on video and audio tapes Documentation of goal setting and follow-up analysis
Relationships with Colleagues	Anecdotal observations from cooperating teacher(s) and university supervisor Evidence of team planning
Professional Growth (includes student teaching requirements and portfolio)	Attendance at professional meetings, followed by reporting on classroom applications Examples of committee work with fellow teachers and/or school and community members Active membership in professional organizations

Principle 10: The student teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.
(Collaborative Relationships)

Element/Indicator	Suggested evidence
Participation in School/District Events and Projects	Evidence of participation in extra-curricular activities Planning for and involving students in community projects Handouts or news articles from events Samples of materials prepared from meetings, presentations, etc.
Sensitivity to Student Needs and Awareness of Community Resources	Documented contact with community resources
Respectful and Productive Communication with Families	Formal and informal communication with parents or guardians Newsletters Parent-teacher conference participation and documentation Feedback from parents Record of parent contacts