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Professional portfolios : creating a framework for teacher accountability portfolios

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Professional portfolios : creating a framework for teacher accountability portfolios

Abstract

Educators are being held accountable for their actions in the classroom by their states and local districts. In Iowa teachers are required to demonstrate competency for eight different standards that include 42 criteria. One form of meeting this requirement is by creating a professional portfolio. A problem that many educators face is the lack of direction provided to create this portfolio.

The purpose of this project was to design a framework for creating a professional portfolio. Instruction on this framework will be provided through seven professional development sessions targeted for novice teachers. At the completion of the professional development sessions participants will have a finished professional portfolio that meets accountability mandates by the state of Iowa.



Professional Portfolios: Creating a Framework for Teacher Accountability Portfolios

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ABSTRACT

Educators are being held accountable for their actions in the classroom by their states and local districts. In Iowa teachers are required to demonstrate competency for eight different standards that include 42 criteria. One form of meeting this requirement is by creating a professional portfolio. A problem that many educators face is the lack of direction provided to create this portfolio. The purpose of this project was to design a framework for creating a professional portfolio. Instruction on this framework will be provided through seven professional development sessions targeted for novice teachers. At the completion of the professional development sessions participants will have a finished professional portfolio that meets accountability mandates by the state of Iowa.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Professional portfolios are a tool used by educators to present their accomplishments in the classroom. A portfolio can serve as an accountability measure and be used to provide evidence of the many skills and qualities that teachers possess. Portfolios display strategies used in the classroom, professional growth experiences, theoretical beliefs about teaching and learning, attitudes about the profession, and also reflections about children's work samples. The professional portfolio exhibits evidence of the successes achieved during teaching experiences or educational careers. Within this paper professional portfolio refers to "...the selection of activity-generated products that best represent the essence of teacher performance" (Gelfer, Xu, & Perkins, 2004, p. 127).

Educators can provide evidence of their past contributions by carefully assembling work and personal documents of success. The professional portfolio will allow others to gain a clearer image of what a teacher has already accomplished, what he or she is currently doing, and future ambitions for their professional careers i.e., past, present, and future goals and objectives. Portfolios allow educators to document their best practices and those that can be preserved and even passed on to others.

Overview of the Project

This project focused on helping teachers create professional portfolios. All teachers in Iowa, novice and veteran, are required to provide proof that they are demonstrating the Iowa Teaching Standards, a set of eight standards defined collectively by 42 criteria. Table 1 provides the eight standards. All educators must exhibit these

Table 1
Iowa Teaching Standards

Standard 1: Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of district's student achievement goals.

Standard 2: Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.

Standard 3: Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.

Standard 4: Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meet the multiple learning needs of students.

Standard 5: Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.

Standard 6: Demonstrates competence in classroom management.

Standard 7: Engages in professional growth.

Standard 8: Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.

competencies and compile evidence of meeting these standards as a part of their teacher evaluation. A teacher portfolio is one mechanism for fulfilling this requirement. This new accountability task seems overwhelming to many teachers in the field, particularly beginning teachers. My experience is that many teachers need an organized framework and sample portfolios to review to assist in their portfolio development. Within this project I plan to provide support and assistance as teachers in the Waukee School District create or update their professional portfolio.

Project Description

This project included the design of seven different professional development sessions to assist teachers in the development of individual teacher portfolios. I anticipate

implementation of this professional development experience during the 2006-2007 school year with teachers at my school. The target group of participants includes first and second year teachers who have not obtained their standard teaching license. Group members will discuss the Iowa Teaching Standards and work towards completion of their professional portfolio.

As the leader of the group and professional development activities, I have created and provided agenda items and session goals that are clear and manageable. As a team, we will brainstorm ideas for artifacts that can be included in the portfolio and create a rationale to support each artifact (see Appendix A for a complete list). Participants will be expected to collect their artifacts and organize them according to the corresponding standard. Each entry will include a completed coversheet with an explanation of the rationale for and a short reflection about the artifact.

Common features of portfolios include alignment with professional teaching standards, selected examples of both student and teacher work, captions and commentaries that explain and reflect. There is no question among educators that teacher portfolios with these components are valuable tools for professional development across teachers' careers. (Maurice & Shaw, 1999, p. 2)

Participation in this professional development will be on a volunteer basis. Teachers will be presented with session timelines and expectations and then have the choice of attending the sessions. Teachers who decide to participate will be required to attend six of the seven sessions in order to maintain consistency within the group. There

will be seven 60 minute meetings to review, discuss, and create individual professional portfolios. We will meet monthly with the goal of having our portfolios finished by April 2007. One or two standards will be assigned as the focus of each meeting. During our meeting time we will discuss artifacts from previous weeks and share the write-ups we have done, brainstorm artifacts that would support each criterion for the new standard, and go back to our classrooms to collect these artifacts.

Purpose

Portfolios are mandated for all teachers in Iowa as a part of the teacher evaluation system and serve a two-fold purpose. First, portfolios provide evidence of accountability in the classroom. Portfolios provide clear and concise evidence of the quality of an educator's classroom teaching and practices. Creating an individualized and creative portfolio can help a teacher set themselves apart from others. Portfolios are an excellent tool to document the practices we would like to preserve and pass on to others. Second, portfolios serve as a tool to improve practice and teacher quality. Portfolios engage teachers in the examination of current practices and provide opportunities to engage in self-reflection of teaching—upon what has been good, what could be better, and why.

Project Rationale

Over my four years of teaching experience in Iowa, I have participated in the teacher evaluation process and have been required to provide evidence related to the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria. As stated above, this newly legislated mandate requires teachers to document their effectiveness as an educator and meet state accountability requirements. This accountability component is typically fulfilled in the form of a

professional portfolio. Although the specific standards are determined by the state of Iowa, districts vary in the type and depth of evidence they require. It is my goal to provide assistance to teachers within my district who are trying to meet the district and state guidelines. To do this I have structured a template and provided the framework for completing a professional portfolio in the Waukee School District.

The Importance of the Project

New legislative mandates require beginning teachers in Iowa to complete a two-year evaluation plan. “The purpose of this plan is to ensure that the Iowa Teaching Standards, criteria for the standards, and the expectations of the local district are understood, accepted, and demonstrated” (Iowa Department of Education, 2003, p. 7). This legislation has created the reason for this project. Expectations, directions, and guidelines are available for new teachers so that they can feel confident about completing a portfolio. However, there are several different ways in which an acceptable portfolio could be put together. Different samples of portfolios should be available for teachers to generate ideas for professional development and also to serve as a model. A list of standards and criteria has been provided to all teachers; however ideas for artifacts that meet each criterion is not yet mapped out. An artifact is anything that provides evidence that a standard and criteria have been met. This could include lesson plans, student work samples, parent newsletters, etc. Figure 1 provides an example of an artifact that meets requirements for standard 1a. (See appendix B for more examples.)

My role in this project is to help fill in the missing pieces of the portfolio development. I will provide leadership to a collaborative group of novice teachers as we

Figure 1
Progress Update Artifact

**WOODWARD-GRANGER ELEMENTARY
 PROGRESS UPDATE**

Name: Scott Shumaker Grade: Kindergarten

Teacher: Mrs. Messer Date: January 10, 2004

Student Strengths:

Scott is doing a very good job academically in the classroom. He knows all of this letters, sounds, and is doing a nice job counting. Scott is sounding out small words and is learning more and more sight words. He does a nice job writing in his journal by sounding out the words he wants to write and figuring out which letter makes that sound.

Student Needs To Work On:

I don't have any concerns about Scott at this time. I can tell that he has been reading at home. It is really showing in all of his work.

Comments:

Scott is a quiet leader in the classroom. He is so polite and very patient with his peers, sometimes even too patient. When he gets with the right friends he can get a little silly, but it is nice to see that side of him sometimes. He is on task during group activities and participates in our discussions. He is a good helper to me and to his classmates.

*Working together as a team, the student will achieve.
 Glad to have you on board!*

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

complete our portfolios together. A timeline will be given with specific items to accomplish for each meeting. I will also assume the responsibility to maintain contact with school district administrators and Area Education Agency (AEA) personnel who can answer questions and provide assistance in ways that I cannot.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The idea for this project came into existence when I was required to complete a professional portfolio as a part of my mentoring and induction program in 2004. I finished my portfolio during my second year of teaching with little guidance or direction. It was a very challenging and frustrating assignment at times. There were few guidelines about the portfolio and even fewer professionals who understood the rationale behind it and were able to offer help.

I wanted to learn more about portfolios so that I could offer assistance to other teachers who are searching for help. To expand my knowledge of professional portfolios, I reviewed available literature, viewed other portfolios, and reviewed requirements for other districts. I had two main questions that I wanted answered. First, what is the purpose of a professional portfolio? Second, what should a professional portfolio look like once it is completed? With this in mind I began searching for information. I found several sources that provided district-created procedures for portfolios that were very specific in requiring evidence for two criteria below each standard. However, I continued to experience difficulty in locating general answers or specific guidelines. Below I provide the results of my literature review.

Purpose of Professional Portfolios

The literature that I reviewed for this project included several websites, articles and research studies geared toward teachers and college students, district expectations, the Iowa Department of Education teacher quality information, and books developed for

helping teachers create portfolios. This review begins with a brief historical perspective on portfolios and then addresses the two main purposes of portfolios, teacher quality and teacher accountability.

“Artists, photographers, and architects all have portfolios in which they display their best work” (Sheldin, 1997, p. 1). Portfolios, created as a purposeful collection of student work, have been used as a tool for performance assessment for children in school for a number of years (Grace, 1992; Meisels, 1995). Creating a student portfolio is a form of authentic assessment, which involves judging work from a realistic context. Grace (1992) states that, “Portfolios enable children to participate in assessing their own work; keep track of individual children’s progress; and provide a basis for evaluating the quality of individual children’s overall performance” (p. 1). Teachers need evidence of their growth and successes over time just like other professionals (Scholastic, 1996). Professional portfolios serve a similar purpose for teachers, providing a way to examine and ensure quality pedagogical practices.

Teacher Quality

The federal law, No Child Left Behind, requires all teachers to be highly qualified in their teaching area by the 2005-2006 academic year (US Department of Education, 2003). This means that teachers must be fully certified in their teaching area and also demonstrate competency in teaching. Teachers are required to perform at a high standard and prove that they are meeting district and state requirements. One way to provide evidence that a teacher is highly qualified is to create a professional portfolio.

In 1995 the National School Reform Faculty carried out a longitudinal study of professional education portfolios (Cushman, 1999). NSRF challenged 800 teachers to create portfolios that showed evidence of personal learning, growth, and self reflection. The idea to create a professional portfolio stemmed from teachers' desire to improve their practice and student achievement. The theory behind professional education portfolios is that by allowing others to critique your work it will provide an opportunity for new confidence, validity of one's practice, and professional growth to occur.

This challenge was extended to a group called the Critical Friends Group (CFG). Members met regularly with a trained peer coach to strategize on how to increase student learning, improve practice, and hold one another accountable for their professional work. Participants developed standards for adult and student learning. Using the portfolio format that teachers are so familiar with because it is often used for their own classroom assessments of student work, group members presented reflections and examinations of their own work.

Through this beginning portfolio development, practitioners realized that they could learn quality lessons about their teaching and how to improve their practice through the process of creating the portfolio. According to Cushman (1999), "It [portfolio development] aims to build a platform for collaborative, ongoing reflection and learning among teachers in school sites and among networks" (p. 2). These new discoveries about one's practice can lead a teacher in defining the direction of future professional development. Teachers who participated in the initial stages of portfolio development felt that it was a promising strategy for school reform. Eric Buchen, a CFG member and

study participant concluded that, “It forces me to constantly and consistently look at what I’m doing, making sure that what I’m doing is good—for students and for me—and to improve. You can’t stay stagnant” (p. 5).

Teacher Accountability

The state of Iowa has created a model framework as a pattern for local districts to create teacher evaluation systems. This model is written to support the Iowa teaching standards and criteria. Within this model are several different stages of evaluation based on a teacher’s years of teaching experience. In the following paragraphs, Tier I and Tier II of this framework will be examined more closely.

Tier I is for beginning teachers. A beginning teacher is someone who is working as a classroom teacher under an initial license that has been issued by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. “The primary purpose of Tier I is to generate useable and reliable data that will support making a decision to recommend for licensure a beginning teacher and will support the movement of the beginning teacher to the career teacher level” (Iowa Department of Education, 2003, p.1). Teachers who fall within Tier I are required to create a professional portfolio during years one and two of their teaching career. The portfolio is created to ensure that the Iowa Teaching Standards and criteria along with local school district expectations are understood, accepted, and demonstrated. “The professional portfolio serves as a catalyst for substantive growth in areas of teaching, philosophy, methods, and goals” (Iowa Department of Education, 2003, p. 7). At the completion of year two administrators review the finished portfolio and recommend

continued employment and movement to career teacher status or identify areas for required improvement to continue temporary licensure status.

A professional portfolio is also a vital tool for career teachers. A career teacher is an individual teaching with a standard license that has completed at least two years of successful teaching in an Iowa public school or at least three years of successful teaching in a private school or a school in another state. Once a teacher has been deemed a career teacher they move into Tier II. In Tier II teachers are responsible for creating a Teacher Career Development Plan (TCDP). This plan is created by the teacher and can be based on an area of choice such as career improvement, student achievement, student learning, Iowa Teaching Standards, etc. A career teacher may choose to complete a professional portfolio to fulfill the required TCDP. Administrators will review the teacher's progress toward meeting the goal and write a performance review based on the outcome that is placed in the district file. Career teachers will continue in Tier II for the remainder of their teaching career.

Additional Uses

In addition to meeting Tier I and Tier II teaching requirements, creating a portfolio is helpful for other aspects in teaching as well. Typically a professional portfolio is designed for administrators to assess teaching performance, but the audience can include more than just a building principal. As a student in a teacher preparation program the portfolio can provide evidence of the many field experiences completed and is a way of introducing yourself to cooperating teachers, and administrators. As a professional educator your portfolio can be reviewed by superintendents, teachers, and possibly school

board members during job interviews. “Most importantly, the portfolio provides you, the author, with an informative and accurate picture of your professional development and growth” (Campbell, Cignetti, Melenyzer, Nettles, & Wyman, 2001, p. 6).

Once completed the professional portfolio can be used to your advantage. First, it will serve as a comprehensive picture of your many accomplishments as a professional. Others will be able to judge your performance based on the information compiled. Second, completing the professional portfolio will help you gain a better understanding of your own professional growth and help you envision what path your future leaning should take (Doolittle, 1994). You will be enabled to set realistic and meaningful goals for yourself.

State Portfolio Requirements.

The Iowa Department of Education requires all teachers who began teaching after July 1, 2001 to be evaluated under a new system. This system requires teachers to provide competency in the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria in order to obtain a standard teaching license. The state of Iowa requires teachers to submit evidence. However, the state does not have specific requirements on how teachers should go about completing this evaluation. The state maintains that, “There is no specific mandate to create a teacher portfolio. While this may make good sense, districts have the discretion to establish data collection systems that fit local expectations.” (Iowa Department of Education FAQ, p. 4). While there is a requirement for district evaluators to examine evidence related to the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria, there is not a specific expectation for the development of a portfolio to display this evidence. Local districts are

in charge of determining what types of evidence could be used to support the standards and various criteria.

Waukee School District Portfolio Requirements.

Teachers, administrators, and school board members in Waukee School District worked to create a Waukee Community School District Professional Growth Model (2005) that states, “Being a teacher in Waukee represents the highest level of professionalism, caring, and commitment to students” (p. 1). The district created a Professional Growth Model that contains clear criteria for evaluation and provides a beginning teacher a framework to enhance growth, clear expectations, outlines for professional performance, and a method for accountability. One requirement within this model is for teachers to provide evidence of competency for the Iowa Teaching Standards. Waukee asks for this evidence in the form of artifacts that can be compiled in a professional portfolio. A teacher is expected to compile artifacts throughout the first two years of teaching in the district and complete a portfolio for the building principal by May of the second year. At this step in the teaching career ladder, building administrators will evaluate the portfolio and recommend the conditional licensed teacher for a standard license or require a third year of probationary work to help boost the teacher’s performance.

Initial license teachers in Iowa are required to complete a professional portfolio in order to show competency in the Iowa teaching standards. Teachers often need help with determining exactly how to go about putting a portfolio together.

Suggested Formats/Criteria for Portfolio Development.

How to Develop a Professional Portfolio: A Manual for Teachers by Campbell et al. (2001) provides a step-by-step guide to creating a professional portfolio. This book answers the questions: (a) What is a portfolio, (b) How do I organize my portfolio, (c) What evidence should I include, (d) Who is the audience for my portfolio, and (e) How might I use my portfolio.

“A portfolio is an organized, goal-driven documentation of your professional growth and achieved competence in the complex act called teaching” (Campbell et al., 2001, p. 3). Three different types of portfolios are defined. First, a working portfolio is a larger, more complete version of the portfolio. It often contains entire documents, videos, notebooks, or even computer disks to help give the proper evidence. The second, presentation portfolio, is considerably smaller and more concise than a working portfolio. This type of portfolio is used to provide an easy-to-read picture of your professional ability. The third type of portfolio teachers may complete is a professional portfolio. The design of this portfolio introduced in this project will contain the Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria. For each criterion an artifact must be included to provide evidence that supports the teacher’s competence in that area.

The task of organizing a portfolio can be challenging. The most important thing to consider is choosing a system that works for the individual teacher. A portfolio must be clear and meaningful to other educators as well. It is necessary to organize the portfolio around the Iowa teaching standards.

Creating a file folder for each standard is an easy way to roughly sort all documents and artifacts to get started. First, become familiar with the standards to make sorting your papers into the proper category an easier task and then effortlessly add them to your portfolio. Evidence that is included in a portfolio will vary among educators. Each Iowa Teaching Standard also includes a group of criteria that helps clearly define the goal. An artifact, rationale, and reflection should be included for each criterion under each standard. “An artifact is tangible evidence of knowledge that is gained, skills that are mastered, values that are clarified, or dispositions and attitudes that are characteristic of you” (Campbell et al., 2001, p. 6). Examples of artifacts include report cards, formal observations, class rules, daily student work, contact log, etc. Artifacts that represent the very best professional work and growth should be included as evidence in a teacher’s professional portfolio.

The following section gives an overview of the professional development experience and what participation in the professional development sessions will include. A meeting agenda for participants and detailed agenda for me as leader provide specific information about the format of each session.

Procedures: Design of Professional Development Sessions for Creation of the Professional Portfolio for Waukee School District Teachers

The purpose of this project was to design a professional development experience for first and second year teachers who are interested in learning to compile the professional development portfolio required by the State of Iowa and the Waukee School District.

Overview.

Seven professional development sessions have been created for teachers who are interested in completing portfolios in collaboration with their peers. This professional development opportunity will allow first and second year teachers an opportunity to complete a professional portfolio. Any other teachers who are interested in completing a portfolio are also welcome to join; participation is strictly voluntary.

Teachers who choose to attend the professional development sessions will be required to be present at six of the seven work sessions. Requesting regular attendance is necessary so that the group can maintain consistency and reliability. The commitment to this group will require participants to work as a team during each session. Participants will be grouped according to the grade(s) that they teach. Completion of tasks outside of the required meeting time is also a responsibility of each group member.

The initial introductory meeting will be held in September to organize the group, give a general overview of what will happen, identify what is expected, and hand out a timeline for the remaining meetings. Each of the following meetings will be focused on specific standard. As the group leader it is my responsibility to make myself available for any questions or concerns outside of scheduled meetings. I will also provide sample portfolios, page formats, and reflections for teachers to view. Figure 2 provides an example of a reflection. (See appendix B for additional reflection examples.) I will also compose evaluation pieces to help reform future sessions. As formative evaluation, group members will be asked to give feedback after two sessions to see what changes can be made to best benefit the teachers and their time. Summative feedback will also be given

Figure 2
Standard 1a Sample Reflection

Standard 1: Demonstrate ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district student achievement goals.

a. Provides evidence of student learning to students, families, and staff.

Progress reports are sent home three times a year to help communicate with parents in between the trimester report cards. They tell parents what strengths and weaknesses have been in the classroom. I also provide comments about positive and negative behavior. Progress reports benefit parents, students, and teachers by keeping an open line of communication consistently throughout the school year.

at the completion of our professional development meetings. Feedback will be helpful when considering how this can be revamped for the future.

Session Agendas

Every session will be conducted in a similar format. Sessions will start with a review of the previous standard (an introduction of Standard 1 at the first session). Participants will share artifacts they have collected and the reflections that they have written. Through the course of the meeting small groups will compose a list of possible artifacts to be used as evidence for the standard. Individuals are responsible for making notes of specific artifacts that are used in their practice and can be used in their own portfolio. At the end of each meeting group members will have a clear understanding of the standard and have chosen artifacts they can use to fulfill the criteria. After the meeting each person will be responsible for collecting necessary artifacts and writing a reflection for each piece.

At the beginning of each meeting group members will be given the agenda that includes specific standards and criteria to be discussed. Figure 3 is the agenda created for the first professional development session that focuses on Standard 1. A more detailed agenda has also been created for the session leader. This includes step by step instructions for each portion of the professional development meeting, materials that are needed, and time allotment for each topic. Agendas can be found for the first two professional development sessions in Appendix C and Appendix D.

Figure 3
Meeting Agenda

Meeting Agenda
Standard 1
October 9, 2006 4:00-5:00

I. Define Standard—5 minutes

Standard 1: Demonstrates the ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals.

- a. Provides evidence of student learning to students, families, and staff.
- b. Implements strategies supporting student, building, and district goals.
- c. Uses student performance data as a guide for decision making.
- d. Accepts and demonstrates responsibility for creating a classroom culture that supports the learning of every student.
- e. Creates an environment of mutual respect, rapport, and fairness.
- f. Participates in and contributes to a school culture that focuses on improved student learning.
- g. Communicates with students, families, colleagues, and communities effectively and accurately.

II. Linking to Practice—30 minutes

--Brainstorm things you do within your classroom, grade level team, or building committee that could serve as a data source for the given criteria. Consult the list provided for additional ideas.

--District requirements state that at least two criteria should be covered for each standard.

III. Reflection—15 minutes

--Write a reflection for each piece that has been chosen for your portfolio. Explain how it meets the requirement, what worked well, and what could be improved upon for the future.

IV. Examine/ Identify Specific Artifacts—10 minutes

--Pinpoint particular artifacts that can be used in your individual portfolio. Think of lessons or projects that give clear detail to support that you are demonstrating the chosen criteria.

V. Assignment

--Complete Standard 1 by November meeting and come prepared to share your work with the group.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Portfolios are important tools that are used in many different ways, in a countless number of professions to serve various purposes. Educators use professional portfolios to show administrators that they are competent in their profession. These portfolios are used to show growth over time and also serve as an accountability piece to provide evidence of the quality of instruction in classrooms.

The state of Iowa requires beginning teachers to demonstrate that they are proficient by providing proof of competency in eight standards and 42 criteria. Each school district is required to develop their plan about how this should be accomplished. Many districts are choosing to meet this requirement through completion of a professional portfolio. Professional portfolios can take on several different forms, but should include the standard and criteria, an artifact, which is a piece of evidence that gives proof of that criterion, and a short reflection. Administrators need to see a teacher's documentation at the completion of the second year of teaching in order for beginning teachers to receive their standard teaching license.

Because the state allows local districts to determine how they will hold each teacher responsible for documenting their competency as an educator, it is important for districts to have a concrete plan in place. Requirements should be clearly stated and made available to teachers. An excellent way to provide direction is through professional development sessions.

This project has provided a model for Iowa teachers in professional development of preparing professional education portfolios. It has been developed specifically to assist novice teachers in the Waukee School District in the completion of the teacher evaluation system. Through the seven sessions that I have designed, novice and experienced teachers will be able to better understand the Iowa Teaching Standards, generate a list of potential artifacts, and work on writing reflections about their practice. The Waukee Community School District and other districts that choose to provide professional development as designed in this project will be helping teachers and administrators through the evaluation process.

Providing a framework for developing professional education portfolios is beneficial because it gives busy overwhelmed beginning teachers the help they need in working toward meeting specific accountability requirements. It is also beneficial because it gives beginning teachers a chance to reflect about their practice. This professional development experience will help Iowa teachers become familiar with Iowa's mandated standards and criteria. This professional education portfolio professional development framework will enable novice, or experienced teachers in providing evidence of their competency and quality as an Iowa educator.

Recommendations

It is my recommendation that Iowa school districts should be proactive in helping teachers create professional portfolios. Specifically the following recommendations could lead to accomplishing this task:

1. Implementing a professional development program to help teachers create professional education portfolios.
2. Providing teachers with clear framework.
3. Including examples of what a portfolio should look like.
4. Granting opportunities for district wide collaboration and sharing so that teachers can learn from their peers in other buildings.
5. Creating a district website to help develop portfolios and share updated information.
6. Encouraging the Department of Education to write a handbook about professional portfolios with examples of teacher artifacts and reflections.

If these steps are taken, educators and administrators will both benefit from the detailed instruction. Creating this professional development program will reap rewards for many years to come. This professional development framework that has been created will enable the process to get moving in the right direction.

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APPENDIX A
IOWA TEACHING STANDARDS

Iowa Teaching Standards and Criteria

Standard 1: Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of district's student achievement goals.

- a. Provides evidence of student learning to students, families, and staff.
 - Report cards
 - Quarterly progress reports
 - Contact logs
 - Emails
 - Letters home to parents
 - Running records and benchmarks
- b. Implements strategies supporting student, building, and district goals.
 - Lesson plans
 - BAT interventions
 - Interview with a student, parent, or administrator
 - Grade level goal plan
- c. Uses student performance data as a guide for decision making.
 - Running records
 - Benchmarks
 - Tests/ quizzes
 - Teacher observations
 - Standardized test scores
- d. Accepts and demonstrates responsibility for creating a classroom culture that supports the learning of every student.
 - IEP meetings
 - Pictures of classroom showing room arrangement
 - Guided reading groups and centers
 - Classroom rules
 - Formal observation
- e. Creates an environment of mutual respect, rapport, and fairness.
 - Video taped lesson
 - Office referral slips
 - Student/parent surveys
 - Class rules
 - Citizenship posters
 - Behavior charts
- f. Participates in and contributes to a school culture that focuses on improved student learning.
 - Staff development
 - Building goal committees
 - Curriculum committees
 - Grade level committees
 - Problem solving meetings to help student performance or behavior

- g. Communicates with students, families, colleagues, and communities effectively and accurately.
- Contact logs
 - Email
 - Classroom or building newsletters
 - Parent teacher conferences
 - Grade level planning
 - BAT meetings

Standard 2: Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.

- a. Understands and uses key concepts, underlying themes, relationships, and different perspectives related to the content area.
- Observation by administrator
 - Walk through observations
 - Lesson plans
 - Grade level integrated units
 - Curriculum mapping
 - Cross curricular activities
 - Scope and sequence
- b. Uses knowledge of student development to make learning experiences in the content area meaningful and accessible for every student.
- Classroom modifications
 - Posters at eye level
 - BAT interventions
 - Title I reading
 - Reading recovery placement
 - Modified lesson plans
- c. Relates ideas and information within and across content areas.
- Team teaching
 - Staff meetings
 - Team planning with grade level teachers
 - Interdisciplinary units
 - Formal observation
- d. Understands and uses instructional strategies that are appropriate to the content area.
- Lesson plans
 - Guided reading groups
 - Development of instructional centers
 - Teacher created materials
 - Classes taken
 - Formal observation

Standard 3: Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.

- a. Uses student achievement data, local standards, and the district curriculum in planning for instruction.
 - Lesson plans with grade level curriculum benchmarks
 - Running records
 - Anecdotal records
 - Benchmark tests
 - Building and individual goals
 - District assessments
 - Pre-observation form
 - Formal observation
- b. Sets and communicates high expectation for social, behavioral, and academic success of all students.
 - List of room expectations
 - Individual behavior plans
 - Student goal setting documents
 - Classroom newsletters
 - Reinforcement of social skills
 - Classroom behavior plan/reward system
- c. Uses student's developmental needs, backgrounds, and interests in planning for instruction.
 - Guided reading groups based on instructional level
 - Math groups based on pretest assessment results
 - Grouping for literature circles
 - BAT interventions
 - Student interest inventories
 - Incorporation of cultural backgrounds into curriculum
- d. Selects strategies to engage all students in learning.
 - Multiple intelligences
 - Cooperative learning groups
 - Buddy check
 - Sticks used to draw names for student participation
 - Learning strategies
 - Modified lessons for special needs students
 - Technology integration
 - Writing terms in "students' words"
- e. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the development and sequencing of instruction.
 - Printed materials in room
 - Technology integration
 - Professional library materials
 - Collaborating with special education or TAG teachers

Standard 4: Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meet the multiple learning needs of students.

- a. Aligns classroom instruction with local standards and district curriculum.
 - Weekly lesson plans
 - Integrated curriculum
 - Learning center plans
 - District standards and grade level benchmarks
 - District curriculum guide
 - Formal observation
- b. Uses research-based instructional strategies that address the full range of cognitive levels.
 - Curriculum maps
 - Test questions aligned with standards
 - Comprehension strategies lesson plans
 - Word work plans and charts
 - 6-traits of writing
 - Handwriting without tears
 - Special education IEP
- c. Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in adjusting instruction to meet student needs.
 - Modified reading assignments
 - Lesson plans reflection the grouping patterns
 - Learning centers
 - Enrichment teaching
 - Tutoring log
 - Guided reading record sheet
- d. Engages students in varied experiences that meet diverse needs and promote social, emotional, and academic growth.
 - Field trip records
 - Guest speakers
 - Small group teaching log
 - Integrated curriculum
 - Hands on math plans
 - Social skills curriculum
 - Formal observation
- e. Connects students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in the instructional process.
 - Parent communication log
 - Parent student teacher conferences
 - Comprehension strategies
 - Lesson plans
 - Junior Achievement
 - Buddies program
 - Formal observation

- f. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the delivery of instruction.
 - Technology classes
 - Computer center in classroom—software
 - Listening center
 - Use of digital cameras
 - PowerBook projector use
 - Guided reading library
 - Team planning dates
 - Heartland AEA

Standard 5: Uses a variety of methods of monitor student learning.

- a. Aligns classroom assessment with instruction.
 - Performance based assessments standards integrated into lesson plans
 - Building goals
 - Benchmark testing
 - Running records
 - District assessments
 - Test mapping
 - Anecdotal records
- b. Communicates assessment criteria and standards to all students and parents.
 - Rubrics
 - Syllabus
 - Parent teacher conferences
 - Curriculum night information
 - ITBS scores
 - Powerschool—on-line grade and homework program
 - Contact log
- c. Understands and uses the results of multiple assessments to guide planning and instruction.
 - Daily work
 - Math and writing probes
 - Pre-test/ post-test results
 - Running records
 - Test scores
- d. Guides students in goal setting and assessing their own learning.
 - Self-evaluation and peer evaluation sheets
 - Behavior and grade charting
 - Student involved conferences
 - Individual progress charts
 - Progress monitoring
- e. Provides substantive, timely, and constructive feedback to students and parents.
 - Grades
 - Test reviews
 - Parent conferences

- Emails
 - Contact log
 - Behavior/progress charts
- f. Works with other staff and building and district leadership in analysis of student progress.
- Grade level meetings
 - Curriculum meetings
 - BAT meetings
 - Email
 - Smart goals
 - Mentoring
 - Committee work
 - Building/district goals
 - In-services
 - Curriculum development committee

Standard 6: Demonstrates competence in classroom management.

- a. Creates a learning community that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement, and self-regulation for every student.
- Flexible instructional groups
 - Literature circles
 - Posted classroom rules
 - Self-evaluation
 - Lesson plans
 - Individual behavior plans
 - Seating charts
 - Formal observation
- b. Establishes, communicates, models, and maintains standards of responsible student behavior.
- Classroom rules
 - Role play plans
 - List of line/body basics
 - Behavior plan
 - Formal observation
 - Office referrals
- c. Develops and implements classroom procedures and routines that support high expectation for student learning.
- Organized class syllabus
 - Form A/B tests
 - Lesson plans
 - Grade charts
 - Student goals
 - Behavior charts/ plans
 - Daily schedule posted

- Student produced rules
- Social skills posters
- d. Uses instruction time effectively to maximize student achievement.
 - Lesson plans
 - Teachable moments
 - Seat work that models group instruction
 - Daily schedule of events
- e. Creates a safe and purposeful learning environment.
 - Appropriate sized furniture
 - Behavior goals
 - Centers that support curriculum
 - Modified seating arrangements
 - Routines posted
 - Supplies leveled
 - Fluency boxes
 - Bulletin boards
 - Rules posted
 - Formal observation

Standard 7: Engages in professional growth.

- a. Demonstrates habits and skills of continuous inquiry and learning.
 - Transcripts of classes taken
 - Action plans
 - Written reflection on professional articles
 - Attending conferences
 - Attendance at curriculum meetings
- b. Works collaboratively to improve professional practice and student learning.
 - Logs of team meetings
 - Evidence of attendance of IEP meetings
 - Observation of professional relationships with grade level team, building administrators, curriculum director, or reading strategist
- c. Applies research, knowledge, and skills from professional development
 - Observation by supervisor
 - Video tape of teaching
 - Weekly lesson plans
 - Formal observation
- d. Establishes and implements professional development plans based upon the teacher's needs aligned to the Iowa teaching standards and district/building student achievement goals.
 - Professional growth plan with goals and data to support goals
 - Samples of lesson plans and student work that show movement toward district/ building goals

Standard 8: Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.

- a. Adheres to board policies, district procedures, and contractual obligations.
 - a. Attendance records
 - b. Staff development meetings
 - c. Event duties
 - d. Refers to teacher handbook and contract
 - e. Evaluations
- b. Demonstrates professional and ethical conduct as defined by state law and individual district policy.
 - a. Teacher evaluations—formative or summative
 - b. Professional growth plans
 - c. Refers to teacher handbook
 - d. Parent notes
 - e. Observations
- c. Contributes to efforts to achieve district and building goals.
 - a. Products from a committee work
 - b. Attends staff and team meetings
 - c. Curriculum meeting minutes
 - d. Posts district and building goals in classroom
 - e. Grade level goals and notes
 - f. Student data
- d. Demonstrates an understanding of and respect for all learning and staff.
 - a. Collaboration with grade level/ department peers
 - b. Mentor/ mentee log
 - c. Grade level meetings
 - d. Implementation of social skills
 - e. Collaboration notes and meetings
- e. Collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and communities to enhance student learning.
 - a. Parent teacher conferences
 - b. Newsletters
 - c. Guest speakers
 - d. Field trips
 - e. Mid-term reports
 - f. Staff meetings
 - g. Volunteers in rooms
 - h. Writing conferences with students
 - i. Contact logs
 - j. Open house

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE ARTIFACTS AND REFLECTIONS

Sample artifacts and reflections

Standard 1: Demonstrate ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district student achievement goals.

c. Uses student performance data as a guide for decision-making.

I have used results from DIBELS testing to create individual goals for students who are performing in the intensive area. One-on-one teaching time has been made a priority for these students to help raise their scores. Creating small groups based on ability level has been an important instructional strategy for learners who need a boost academically. It gives them an opportunity for focused instruction more frequently. Using test results to create groups has helped improve future scores.

**Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
Kindergarten Class List Report**

District: Woodward-Granger
School: Woodward-Granger
Date: Middle, 2003-2004
Class: Messer -- (Grade 0)

Note: Scores provide an indication of performance only. If there is any concern about the accuracy of scores for an individual student, performance should be verified by retesting to validate need for support.

Student	Initial Sound Fluency			Letter Naming Fluency			Phoneme Segmentation Fluency			Nonsense Word Fluency			Instructional Recommendations
	Score	Percentile	Status	Score	Percentile	Status	Score	Percentile	Status	Score	Percentile	Status	
	0	1	Deficit	4	3	At risk	0	2	At Risk	0	2	At Risk	Intensive - Needs Substantial Intervention
	1	3	Deficit	21	11	Some risk	0	2	At Risk	6	10	Some Risk	Intensive - Needs Substantial Intervention
	10	10	Emerging	24	17	Some risk	26	28	Low Risk	6	10	Some Risk	Strategic - Additional Intervention
	13	16	Emerging	9	6	At Risk	10	9	Some Risk	0	2	At Risk	Intensive - Needs Substantial Intervention
	14	19	Emerging	29	37	Low risk	4	6	At Risk	22	40	Low Risk	Strategic - Additional Intervention
	16	24	Emerging	38	61	Low risk	28	37	Low Risk	23	43	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	18	27	Emerging	34	51	Low risk	33	53	Low Risk	26	55	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	21	32	Emerging	32	45	Low risk	25	21	Low Risk	18	33	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	23	37	Emerging	33	48	Low risk	36	68	Low Risk	25	49	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	23	37	Emerging	55	91	Low risk	40	84	Low Risk	43	89	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	24	42	Emerging	24	17	Some risk	13	11	Some Risk	15	23	Low Risk	Strategic - Additional Intervention
	25	48	Established	38	61	Low risk	35	64	Low Risk	39	81	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	28	58	Established	41	75	Low risk	34	59	Low Risk	26	55	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	30	64	Established	35	54	Low risk	30	44	Low Risk	33	69	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	33	71	Established	25	23	Some risk	26	28	Low Risk	25	49	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	46	95	Established	46	81	Low risk	32	49	Low Risk	40	85	Low Risk	Benchmark - At Grade Level
	20.2 Mean			30.5 Mean			23.3 Mean			21.7 Mean			

Standard 1: Demonstrate ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district student achievement goals.

- g. Communicates with students, families, colleagues, and communities effectively and accurately.

Effective communication with families has been accomplished through letters and notes sent home. I send daily behavior notes home for students whose parents need to be informed frequently. I also send good notes and informative letters home to parents on a regular basis. Communication about classroom behavior is imperative to success in the classroom.

Sharing

Your child may bring something from home to share with the class on their assigned day. Please do not send breakables or valuable items. Occasionally, I will assign something students need to bring for sharing that relates to our theme.

Monday: Anna L., Conner, Kilei, Ryan

Tuesday: Anna O., Courtney, Luke, Shelbie

Wednesday: Austin, Elizabeth, Mary, Tanner

Thursday: Bodie, Essence, Miranda, Tyler

Friday: Bryce, Julia, Riley

Folders

Each student will be given a folder to take their papers home from school. This folder is also the place to send notes and lunch money back to school with your child. It is important that you check and empty the take home folder each night so that it can come back to school the next day. Folders can be a valuable tool for communication between school and home.

Book Orders

I will be sending book orders home monthly. Book orders are full of great books! They are especially nice when trying to find beginning reader books for your child to read at home. Let me know if the books are a gift for your child so that I can hold the books until a parent or an older sibling can pick them up.

Homework

In September homework will be sent home each Friday and will need to be turned in on Monday. Students earn a sticker for homework completion. The homework is a

great way to show parents what we are learning in the classroom. These assignments should take from five to fifteen minutes to complete

Visiting the classroom

Feel free to visit any time. If you know in advance when you might like to visit, let me know. I have found that parents usually enjoy being involved with classroom activities. If I know you are coming, I can plan on your assistance (with your permission of course).

Discipline Plan

- **Step 1:** Starting point (apple)—Each student will start with a clean slate at the beginning of the day.
- **Step 2:** Warning (turtle)—Student will be verbally warned and will move their clip to the second symbol.
- **Step 3:** Five inside at recess (dinosaur)—the student will spend five minutes of their recess time inside with their head down or working while the other students are playing.
- **Step 4:** Student will be inside all recess (frog)—there they will be required to talk with me about behavior, draw a picture of what happened and what their actions should look like next time, and also fill out a slip to go home to parents.
- **Step 5:** (house) There will be a call home to parents about the student's behavior.

Daily Schedule

8:30- School day begins

9:45-Recess

11:20- 11:45-Lunch

11:50- Recess

1:15-Recess

3:20- Early Bus Dismissal

3:30- All others dismissed

Special Class Schedule:

Monday: Music/ PE

Tuesday: Art

Wednesday: Guidance/ Library

Thursday: PE/ Music

Friday: Guidance/ Library

***Students must have tennis shoes in order to participate in PE. ***

Contact Information

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Woodward-Granger Elementary—999-2287

School Email—smesser@woodward-granger.k12.ia.us

APPENDIX C

SESSION LEADER'S MEETING AGENDA STANDARD 1

Session Leader's Meeting Agenda

Standard 1

October 9, 2006 4:00-5:00

When entering the meeting participants will be asked to sit at tables according to grade level. Appropriate groups might include K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and specials teachers. This will be most beneficial when sharing information and brainstorming artifact ideas. Participants will be able to pick up a meeting agenda and a packet including each standard and criteria along with a page on reflections at their table.

Materials

1 Packet for each person

Chart paper and markers

Scratch paper for brainstorming

Laptop computer to type list

1. Define Standard—5 minutes
 - a. Read the standard and each criterion aloud to the group. Group members may follow along on their agenda or the packet provided which includes all standards and criteria. Ask for general questions or comments after reading and allow time for a very brief discussion. Specific grade level questions can be answered individually in the next portion of the meeting.

2. Linking to Practice—30 minutes

- a. Each group will need to identify a recorder and reporter. Group members will address each criterion and brainstorm a list of possible artifacts that could be included in a portfolio to serve as evidence of completion. Record ideas on a piece of notebook paper at your table. Fifteen minutes will be given to complete this task.
- b. Next, individual groups will share ideas with the whole group that will be recorded onto large chart paper. Each group will be asked to take a turn sharing an idea until all ideas are recorded. As the leader I will write the answers on the chart paper and appoint another volunteer to type them into a list that can be sent to all group members via email for use outside of the regular meeting. Fifteen minutes will be allowed to complete this task.

3. Reflection—15 minutes

- a. Since this is the first time the group will address reflections it is important to take some time and specifically cover the components that should be included in a reflection. Ask the individuals to find the page on reflections that is included in their packet.
- b. The three main points to cover in each reflective piece include: an explanation of how it meets the requirements, what worked well, and what could be improved upon in the future.
- c. Focus on the example given. Read the reflection and point out the three target areas that are addressed. In this reflection it is fairly easy to write about all of the required pieces.

- d. Next look at the ideas listed on the reflection handout. Ask the question about how you might write a reflection differently for each of the given ideas. All suggestions are welcome from the group. From this discussion on reflections participants will understand that there isn't a cookie cutter format that can be used. Careful thought and consideration must be put into each artifact and the reflection should be written accordingly.
- e. It is important to let participants know that this is only a template and it is essential for each person to maintain creativity and a sense of individuality within their reflections.

4. Examine/ Identify Specific Artifacts—10 minutes

- a. Within grade level groups or individually, use the list of ideas created by the group to pin point specific artifacts that can be used for your individual portfolio. Compose an individual list that can be used on your own time when compiling the actual documents.
- b. Remember that it is required that you choose at least two criteria and find artifacts to support them. It would be a good choice to find artifacts for as many as you can so that your portfolio will create a better picture of what you are like as a teacher.
- c. I will be available to answer individual questions during this time.

5. Dismissal and Assignment

- a. Ask for any other questions. Point out contact information on the top of the packet if there are any uncertainties before the next meeting.

- b. Assignment is to complete Standard 1 by November meeting and come prepared to share your work with the group.
- c. Thank you!

APPENDIX D

SESSION LEADER'S MEETING AGENDA STANDARD 2

Session Leader's Meeting Agenda

Standard 2

November 13, 2006 4:00-5:00

When entering the meeting participants will be asked to sit at tables according to grade level. Appropriate groups might include K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and specials teachers. This will be most beneficial when sharing information and brainstorming artifact ideas. Participants will be able to pick up a meeting agenda at their table.

1. Review and Questions—5-7 minutes
 - a. Quickly review the standard from last week.
 - b. Instruct groups to share any “ah ha’s” they might have discovered or anything that helped them complete the previous standard. They can show the artifacts they collected and read from their reflection. Groups will be allowed 5-7 minutes for sharing.
2. Define Standard—5 minutes
 - a. Read the standard and each criterion aloud to the group. Group members may follow along on their agenda or the packet provided which includes all standards and criteria. Ask for general questions or comments after reading and allow time for a very brief discussion. Specific grade level questions can be answered individually in the next portion of the meeting.
3. Linking to Practice—30 minutes
 - a. Each group will need to identify a recorder and reporter. Group members will address each criterion and brainstorm a list of possible artifacts that

could be included in a portfolio to serve as evidence of completion.

Record ideas on a piece of notebook paper at your table. Fifteen minutes will be given to complete this task.

- b. Next, groups will share ideas that will be recorded onto large chart paper. Each group will be asked to take a turn sharing an idea until they are all recorded. As the leader I will write the answers on the chart paper and appoint another volunteer to type them into a list that can be sent to all group members via email for use outside of the regular meeting. Fifteen minutes will be allowed to complete this task.

4. Examine/ Identify Specific Artifacts—10 minutes

- a. Within grade level groups or individually, use the list of ideas created by the group to pin point specific artifacts that can be used for your individual portfolio. Compose an individual list that can be used on your own time when compiling the actual documents.
- b. Remember that it is required that you choose at least two criteria and find artifacts to support them. It would be a good choice to find artifacts for as many as you can so that your portfolio will create a better picture of what you are like as a teacher.
- c. I will be available to answer individual questions during this time.

5. Reflection—10 minutes

- a. Individuals can work on specific reflections for their portfolio. The packet can be referenced for the three main pieces of a reflection that should be included.
- b. I will be available to answer questions at this time.

6. Dismissal and Assignment

- a. Ask for any other questions. Point out contact information on the top of the packet if there are any uncertainties before the next meeting.
- b. Assignment is to complete Standard 2 by December meeting and come prepared to share your work with the group.
- c. Thank you!

APPENDIX E
PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

Participant Materials

Writing a Reflection for your Portfolio

Including a short reflective piece on each artifact is a requirement for your professional portfolio. The purpose is to create a rationale for why you have included this particular artifact as evidence of the given criteria. There are three parts that should be included when writing your reflections.

1. An explanation of how it meets the requirements
2. What worked well
3. What could be improved upon in the future

Some sample artifacts and short reflections have been included on the next few pages as examples for Standard 1 that you may want to look at and consider before you start writing. Each piece should be looked at differently and a reflection should be written specifically to the artifact you are addressing. It is important to remember that this is only a template and it is essential for each person to maintain creativity and a sense of individuality within your reflections