DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 074 PS 024 989

AUTHOR Ashelman, Polly
TITLE Portfolio Assessment: An Early Childhood and Family Studies Department Model.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 9p.; In: "Childhood Education: International Perspectives," see PS 024 960.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Early Childhood Education; Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; *Portfolio Assessment; Portfolios (Background Materials); Professional Development; Self Evaluation (Individuals); Student Evaluation; *Student Teacher Evaluation; Student Teaching; *Teacher Education; Writing Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS Authentic Assessment; Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios; *Kean College of New Jersey

ABSTRACT

Portfolios represent the intersection of assessment and instruction, and they provide a framework for viewing evaluation as complex, multidimensional, and dynamic. This article describes the system of portfolio assessment adopted by the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies at Kean College of New Jersey, which is based primarily on Paulson & Paulson's (1990) Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios. The article begins by describing three departmental goals for the use of portfolio assessment; it then discusses the model's three dimensions and how they are incorporated into the department's system: (1) the stakeholder dimension, involving the relationship of mutual investment shared between each student and faculty advisor; (2) historical dimension, emphasizing changes over time; and (3) activities dimension, describing the contents of the portfolio and illustrating the department's philosophy. The article provides more detail on three facets of the activities component--writing, professional development, and practice--including tasks and courses completed in each area and evaluation conducted. It concludes with a description of how the portfolio system is implemented and early indications of its success. Contains eight references. (EV)

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT: AN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY STUDIES DEPARTMENT MODEL

Polly Ashelman
Kean College of New Jersey
New Jersey, USA

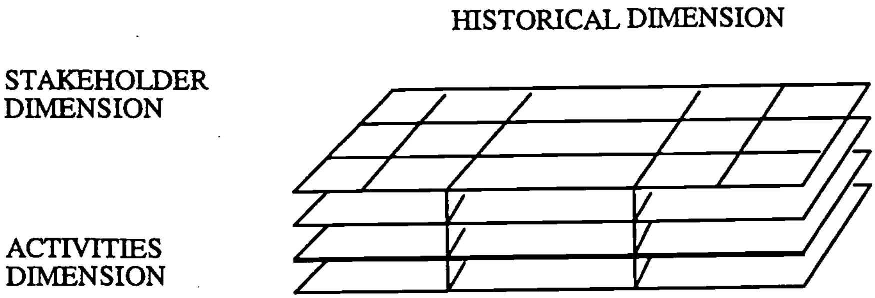
Everyone who teaches deliberates about how to support students' constructivist processes and encounters the recurring question "How can I maximize opportunities for learning and growth?" In an effort to address this issue, members of the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies at Kean College of New Jersey designed a system of portfolio assessment, which has become an integral part of the evaluation process for undergraduate and graduate students. Portfolios represent the intersection of assessment and instruction, and they provide a framework for viewing evaluation as complex, multidimensional and dynamic. Development of metacognitive strategies, student empowerment and responsive program practice are also supported through portfolio assessment (Paulson & Paulson, 1990).

The portfolio assessment design, used by the department, is based primarily on the model of Paulson and Paulson (1990) and the research on stages of adult development (Knowles, 1980). It is also consistent with the principles of constructivism (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1990). A structured but personalized approach to professional growth, and the strong connection between assessment and instruction are emphasized. In addition, portfolio assessment is in keeping with appropriate early childhood practice and outcomes-based teacher education.

Maintaining portfolios for graduate and undergraduate students serves three primary departmental goals. First, assessment for college students is congruent with the department's position on appropriate assessment strategies for young children. Second, instruction and assessment are based on the principles of constructivism, which validate the importance of each student's role in self and shared reflection, goal setting, and personal responsibility for professional growth (Duff, Brown, & Scoy, 1995). Third, assessment involves the faculty in a collegial process of reflection and critical analysis of program outcomes.

An adaptation of The Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios (Paulson & Paulson, 1990) has provided a comprehensive conceptual framework for constructing and evaluating portfolios for students in the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies. This model incorporates three dimensions; Activities, Historical and Stakeholder (See Table 1).

Table 1. The Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios.



Dimensions of the Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios

The Stakeholder Dimension of the Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios involves the relationship of mutual investment shared between each student and faculty advisor. Throughout their course of study, students work with their advisor to choose the samples or artifacts for their portfolio which they feel will best reflect their growth and professional development. Student choice supports the concept of active involvement in assessment, as an essential and vital part of the construction of knowledge (Wadlington, 1995). In addition, as the student and advisor work together to select and analyze information, each invests time and energy that deepens the commitment of both to continued professional growth (Jones, 1993).

The Historical Dimension illustrates a tri-cycle temporal perspective, which is divided into three phases. These phases include a baseline record of performance, transactions, which document changes evidenced in portfolio samples or artifacts over time, and summative information that can be used to verify learning outcomes, at the end of the student's course of studies. Samples collected represent each of these three phases in students' portfolio development. For undergraduates, the three phases are commensurate with the sophomore, junior, and senior levels. The phases of the Historical Dimension for the graduate program are divided between introductory or core courses, specialized courses and electives, and the Advanced

Seminar Research Project, which is the culminating experience for students obtaining a master's degree.

The Activities Dimension describes the contents of the portfolio, and illustrates the department's philosophy. The focus of this dimension is on nurturing the development of professional early childhood educators through a combination of maturation, experience, and reflection. Activities are in keeping with commonly accepted developmental goals and tasks of the profession of early childhood education. Each activity emphasizes self-assessment and reflection, which are primary vehicles for internalizing the values and standards of the profession (NAEYC, 1991; Wadlington, 1995).

The Activities Dimension defines what is to be collected in the portfolio, as well as what is minimally acceptable. The content of the portfolio includes the work of students and analysis of their performance in classroom and field settings. Writing, philosophy/professional development, and practice are the three categories of the Activities Dimension included in the department's model. Multiple samples are collected for each category to strengthen the validity of judgments about performance (See Table 2).

Table 2. Suggested Graduate Portfolio Components.

ACTIVITIES DIMENSION	ACTIVITIES & ANALYSIS
PHASE ONE: CORE COURSES	
1. Professional Development	Professional Growth Plan (EC 5000)
2. Writing	Writing sample: Review of Literature (EC 5000) or Research prospectus (EC 5260)
3. Simulated Practice	Essay, with application of theory to practice (EC 5000)
4. Field Practice	Video of practice, with analysis (EC 5000)
5. Student Choice, Feedback Form & Journal Entries	Samples from course work & professional setting
Portfolio Advisor selected	Portfolio Conference (EC 5000)
PHASE TWO: SPECIALIZED COURSES AND ELECTIVES	
1. Professional Development	Written philosophy (EC 5881 or EC 5230)
2. Writing	Writing sample: Student chooses from Curriculum Project or Action Research
3. Simulated practice	Groups interaction-role play, scenarios
4. Field Practice	Shared video analysis
5. Student choice, Program Feed-back Form, and Journal entries	Samples from field work, leadership role or course work
PHASE THREE: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND ADVANCED SEMINAR PROJECT	
1. Professional development, Writing, Simulated Practice, Field Practice converge	Advanced Seminar Project (EC 5598 & 5599) & Comprehensive Examination
2. Student choice, Program Feed-back Form, and Journal entries	

Writing

Writing is a crucial area of development for undergraduate and graduate students. Through the portfolio process, students are encouraged to engage in critiques of their writing through individual and group activities. Process writing, which includes brainstorming, prewriting, drafting, and editing, is emphasized (Hoskinsson & Thompkins,1994).

Samples of writing are collected at three specified intervals from a variety of contexts. Both students and faculty confer to clarify the process by which writing is to be judged. Writing samples are reviewed using criteria adapted from the Alverno College model as the primary source. This set of indicators includes organization, complexity, analysis, conventions, and context (See Table 3). On the graduate level, the Alverno model is supplemented by the American Psychological Association reference style and a University of Massachusetts Thesis Proposal Evaluation Form. Providing specific feedback and having students analyze models of effective writing are illustrative of strategies that are used to help students who need to improve their writing skills.

Table 3. Writing Assessment.

1=less exp. 2=mod. exp. 3=exp. 4=except. exp.	1	2	3	4
1. Reaching audience through ESTABLISHING OF CONTEXT (sources of thinking, documentation).	____	____	____	____
2. Reaching audience through VERBAL EXPRESSION (word choice, style, tone, i.e. scholarly).	____	____	____	____
3. Reaching audience through APPROPRIATE CONVENTIONS (usage, spelling, structure, format).	____	____	____	____
4. Reaching audience through STRUCTURE (sense of introduction/development/conclusion; focusing by main point made; paragraph).	____	____	____	____
5. Reaching audience through SUPPORT/DEVELOPMENT (organization of ideas, supports organization, idea generation).	____	____	____	____
6. Reaching audience through APPROPRIATE CONTENT (analytical approach, problem-solving process).	____	____	____	____
General assessment of stengths and weaknesses (write in paragraph form:)				

On the undergraduate level, specified writing samples include a research paper developed in four stages during the sophomore year. A lesson plan based on an observational study is developed during the junior year, and a narrative professional report to a child study team is developed during the senior year. Students are also encouraged to submit additional examples of their work, which they feel reflect their professional growth.

On the graduate level, there are three phases in the process of collection and assessment of writing. The first takes place during two specified courses in which a review of literature and a research proposal are developed. The second occurs during completion of three additional required and/or approved elective courses. Within this phase, students choose samples or artifacts from a variety of sources, which include a mini-research project, a review of the literature on a chosen topic, position papers, and essay tests. This phase culminates with a written comprehensive examination. The third includes the development of an Advanced Seminar Research Project, to be written for a professional audience. This project is developed in cooperation with a committee of department members, and progress is shared with the portfolio advisor.

Professional Development

The second area of the Activities Dimension is professional development. This aspect of the Activities Dimension offers a systematic approach by which students are encouraged to reflect on their own behavior and how it corresponds to the standards for the profession (Duff, Brown, & Scoy, 1995). In addition, members of the Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies have identified leadership and commitment to developmentally appropriate practice as desired outcomes for undergraduate and graduate students. Through professional development activities students' growth in these areas can be documented.

Information collected to record growth in the Activities Dimension includes development of a professional philosophy and growth plan. On the undergraduate level, sophomores complete a pre- and post-course self-assessment of motives and expectations entitled, "Myself as Teacher." Juniors develop a paper on their philosophy of early childhood education; working from the abstract prior to their concrete field experience. Seniors prepare a similar paper; this time basing their philosophy on actual field placement, which connects this concrete experience to theory.

During an introductory course, graduate students develop a professional growth plan, which includes goals for change during their course of study. A written professional philosophy, that connects theory and practice, is formulated in the next phase. The professional growth plan and philosophy are reflected upon and modified over time, utilizing structured judgments, based on professional development guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1991). The third phase is completed during a two semester Advanced Seminar Research Project, which is shared with a professional audience through presentation of a workshop, submission of a grant, preparation of a manuscript for publication, or innovative leadership contribution to a professional organization .

Practice

The third facet of the Activities Dimension is practice. In the sophomore, junior, and senior years, undergraduate students engage in field practice of increasing length and intensity. In the sophomore year each student receives a checklist of performance behaviors developed by the department. The same checklist is utilized in both junior and senior field practice and includes a cycle of ongoing observation and feedback, video self-assessment, and shared analysis. The complete checklist has 29 items. An abbreviated sample of this checklist of performance behaviors follows (See Table 4).

Table 4. Checklist of Performance Behaviors.

THE STUDENT TEACHER:						
(1)	1	2	3	4	NA	arranges the environment purposefully for young children.
(2)	1	2	3	4	NA	searches out and provides various materials using library and other resources.
(3)	1	2	3	4	NA	presents the materials in ways that stimulate interest, enthusiasm and curiosity.
(4)	1	2	3	4	NA	organizes the materials in areas accessible for children.

The Activities Dimension of the graduate level encompasses simulated practice, as well as field practice. In specialized courses and informal study groups, graduate students simulate practice through working with scenarios, problems, and dilemmas, which encourage them to interact collaboratively to evaluate experiences and debate both personal and professional issues. This simulated practice culminates with the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination is written in essay format and requires students to formulate an action plan that responds to a specific early childhood or family studies problem or topic. A student's essay must demonstrate appropriate application of theory, research and personal insight. Each examination is read and responded to by three members of the Early Childhood and Family Studies Department. Thus, students are able to discuss their examination results and receive feedback from multiple sources.

Field practice focuses on classroom behavior and change at the school level. Shared video analysis of the graduate student as a practitioner, on-site college faculty and/or peer observation, and a documented statement about performance from the student's supervisor provide data about growth and development. Journals and narratives, as well as examples from children's projects, also yield some of the most important information about student's field practice.

Implementing and Maintaining Portfolios

To implement the portfolio process, the Early Childhood and Family Studies Department established the following steps. Students are introduced to portfolios through an entry course, which is identified at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At that time, faculty and students' responsibilities are specified and criteria for selection of samples and artifacts are established. Advisors are selected who will meet periodically with their students to review the contents of the portfolio. To pilot the full process of analysis with an advisor over a student's course of studies, a random sample of 10 % of the undergraduate and 20 % of the graduate students were selected each year for three years, beginning in 1993-1994. Thus, in 1995-1996, each of the ten faculty members of the department will be the advisor for fifteen undergraduate and six graduate students.

Collecting and maintaining all portfolio samples and artifacts are cooperative processes between the student and advisor. Students are responsible for their portfolio and for making it available to their faculty advisor at specified and spontaneous intervals. Graduate students are asked to fill out program feedback forms at three specified intervals. These forms are intended to provide pertinent information about how the department can be more supportive of students' development. At the conclusion of their course of studies, on both the undergraduate and graduate level, all students have an exit interview with their advisor for the summative purposes of examining their own growth and reflecting on the context for learning provided by the department.

Conclusion

Having all faculty members involved in portfolio advisement has enabled heightened awareness of programmatic concerns and issues in the department. This process supports ongoing faculty reflection on whether existing instructional strategies require departmental changes or modifications. Analysis of portfolio data serves to help with evaluation of how well the teacher education program is meeting its goals. It also provides feedback about the impact of portfolio participation on students' classroom practices with children.

An examination of outcomes for alumni of the graduate program, who participated in constructing their own portfolio, indicated that all were implementing some type of portfolio assessment with children and/or families. Twelve of these students have shared their work on portfolio assessment through presentations at conferences and/or publication of articles. Thus, these graduates have also become better models of appropriate assessment standards for other practitioners to emulate.

References

DeVries, R. & Kohlberg, L. (1990) *Constructivist early education: Overview and comparisons with other programs.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Duff, R.E., Brown, Mac. H., & Scoy, I.J. (1995, May) Reflection and selfevaluation: Keys to professional development. *Young Children. 50.* 8187.

Hoskinsson, K., & Thompkins, G. (1994) *Language arts: Content and teaching strategies.* New York: Merrill.

Jones, E. (1993) Introduction: Growing teachers. In E. Jones (Ed.) *Growing teachers: Partnerships in staff development.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Knowles, M (1980) *The modern practice of adult education.* New York:Cambridge University Press.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1991) Position statement on guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment of children ages 3 through 8. *Young Children, 46,* 21 37.

Paulson, L. & Paulson, P. (1990) *How do portfolios measure up? A cognitive model for assessing portfolios.* Union, WA: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northwest Evaluation Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 334251).

Wadlington, E. (1995, May) Basing early childhood teacher education on adult education principles. *Young Children. 50. 7680.*

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Author(s): HUJALA EEVA (Ed.)

Corporate Source: UNIVERSITY OF OULU EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

Publication Date: 1996

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.

Level 1	Level 2
The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all **Level 1** documents	The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all **Level 2** documents
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY ____ Sample ____ TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)	PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY ____ Sample ____ TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ Check here **For Level 1 Release:** Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical) ***and*** paper copy.	☐ Check here **For Level 2 Release:** Permitting reproduction in microfiche (4" x 6" film) or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic or optical), but ***not*** in paper copy.

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at **Level 1**.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Sign here→ please

Signature: Eila Estola	Printed Name/Position/Title: EILA ESTOLA / Head of The Unit Senior researcher
Organization/Address: University of Oulu Early Education Center Maunonkatu 2 90100 OULU FINLAND	Telephone: 358-8-5534201 FAX: 358-8-5534250
	E-Mail Address: eestola@ktk.oulu.fi Date: 16.10.1996

PS024989

(over)