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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the results of three pilot projects in which portfolios developed by beginning teachers were used as the basis for the decision to award or deny a continuing teaching license. Highlights are outlined from each project: Project ACT, an alternative certification program through East Carolina University; Project TEACH!, a 3-year effort by Teach for America to partner with school districts to recruit, select, develop, assess, and "license" new teachers; and Performance-Based Licensure Project, an alternative to induction programs using ratings on the North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI) as the basis for continuing licensure. The portfolio process was found to broaden the definition of teaching performance, promote reflective practice for beginning teachers, and improve the support provided by mentors and principals. Two major concerns with the process were the costs of portfolio development and assessment, and the need for valid and reliable decisions regarding licensure and continuing employment. Strategies to strengthen the portfolio process and implications for staff development are outlined. Appendices include: (1) Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development; (2) Matrix of Sample Evidence; (3) Evaluation of Portfolio Evidence form; (4) Standards for Staff Development--National Staff Development Council; and (5) The Relationship among the Standards (a chart). (ND)

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**Portfolios for the Continuing Licensure
of Beginning Teachers:
Their Development and Assessment**

A Presentation at the Annual Conference
of the
National Staff Development Council

Vancouver

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Portfolio development and assessment continues to receive significant attention in the education community. At the same time classroom teachers are exploring the use of portfolios to assess student learning, many are also facing opportunities to develop their own professional portfolios to be used for substantive decisions--licensure, National Board Certification, and performance evaluation. Still more teachers are developing portfolios to document professional growth.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the results of three pilot portfolio projects in which portfolios developed by beginning teachers were used as the basis for the decision to award or deny a continuing teaching license. An overview of the three projects will be followed by a description of portfolio documentation. In conclusion, lessons learned from the projects and implications for staff development will be discussed.

Pilot Portfolio Projects

Since 1985, school districts in North Carolina have been required to develop induction programs for beginning teachers. A set of essential teaching skills provided the framework for the support and development of beginning teachers. At the end of the second year of teaching, a decision to award a continuing teaching license has required a rating of “at standard” or better on five functions of the NC Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (NCTPAI): Management of Instructional Time, Management of Student Behavior, Instructional Presentation, Instructional Monitoring, and Instructional Feedback.

Interest in the use of professional portfolios in induction programs has grown, and teacher education faculty at East Carolina University have worked with three pilot projects. All three projects have used professional portfolios developed by beginning teachers as a basis for the decision to award or deny a continuing teaching license. However, the participants, the preparation program, and the context for portfolio development differ in each project. Highlights of each project are described below.

Project ACT

Project ACT is an alternative certification program through East Carolina University with the support of the NC Department of Public Instruction. College graduates with degrees in areas other than teacher education are invited to apply. They must be seeking licensure in areas of scarcity (e.g. math, science, foreign languages, and drama). A cohort of approximately 20 students is admitted in the spring of the year. Students complete a module in educational foundations independently before July 1.

Beginning July 1 and lasting for five weeks, accelerated instruction in essential teaching skills is delivered daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Modules are presented in adolescent development, classroom organization and planning, the special needs child in the classroom, learning theory, classroom management, and assessment. Additional sessions address parent and community relations, content methods, and graphic organizers. During the five-week experience, students develop a unit of instruction in each of their content areas. A simulation of the opening of school is a culminating activity that helps students anticipate the need to plan the classroom arrangement, obtain supplies, and work effectively with parents and staff.

Candidates are employed by local school districts and begin full-time teaching in August. During their first year of teaching, they attend monthly seminars on the ECU campus and develop a professional portfolio. The purpose of the ACT portfolio is to demonstrate competence with respect to the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards (see Appendix A). Each portfolio is organized in ten sections, one section for each standard. Required portfolio components include a class profile, a matrix of evidence, a videotape of teaching, a critique of the video, reflections on teaching, and a note regarding the number of hours spent developing the portfolio. Teachers may include whatever documentation they feel supports each standard, but the portfolio is limited to a single binder. Completed portfolios are reviewed by the ACT faculty.

At the end of the first year of teaching, candidates who have completed the ACT program, satisfied all course deficiencies in the content area, met PRAXIS requirements, and demonstrated satisfactory teaching performance based on classroom observations and the professional portfolio are recommended for an initial teaching license by East Carolina University.

Project TEACH!

NC TEACH! was a three-year effort by Teach for America (TFA) to partner with school districts to recruit, select, develop, assess, and “license” new teachers. Candidates were recent college graduates in areas outside of teacher education who were recruited by Teach for America to teach in rural or inner city schools. The majority of the North Carolina corps were graduates of “prestigious” colleges and universities outside of North Carolina who were hired to teach in rural school districts in eastern North Carolina.

During the first two years of teaching, designated by TEACH! as the “professional teaching residency,” TEACH! provided a professional development program. At the end of two years, TEACH! recommended for licensure those corps members who demonstrated through a portfolio assessment that their performance met standards of excellence. North Carolina teaching licensure is issued by the state agency upon a recommendation from an approved teacher education program. East Carolina University (ECU) agreed to serve as the recommending institution, but ECU worked closely with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and TEACH! to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate the project.

Candidates were recruited during their senior year, and the professional development program began after graduation with a four-week summer program arranged by Teach for America in Houston, Texas. Additional workshops on portfolio development, seminars, and support group activities were delivered by TFA staff in North Carolina. No course work in teacher education was required nationally, but by the third year, the collaborating partners agreed that any candidate seeking a NC license would take at least one professional course at East Carolina University.

Initially, TEACH! selected the NASDTEC standards as the focus for performance based licensure activities because those standards represented excellence in teaching, a level above the essential skills defined by the INTASC standards. The focus was modified during the second year to six areas of teaching: management, curriculum, instruction, assessment, external resources, and professionalism.

The definition of the portfolio also evolved over the course of the three-year project. After the first year, the size of the portfolio was limited to two binders, and the

emphasis on coordinated sets of documentation increased. By the third year, candidates were expected to include three sets of weekly plans, student work, and a teaching video. Assessment of student progress became an important theme. In addition, long range plans, a pedagogy report (self-analysis of strategies), student profiles, and surveys of the principal, colleagues, parents or guardians, and students were required. Portfolio assessors were recruited and trained in North Carolina. Portfolio assessment was conducted in North Carolina during the first two years and in California the third year. The project was discontinued after three years.

Performance-Based Licensure Project

The Performance-Based Licensure Project was developed by the NC Department of Public Instruction in collaboration with volunteer school districts and teacher education representatives as an alternative to induction programs using ratings on the NC Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI) as the basis for continuing licensure. The goal of the project is to enable beginning teachers to assume ownership for their professional growth and development by documenting and reflecting upon their teaching performance in terms of the INTASC standards.

Participants in the project are traditional teacher education graduates who hold initial teaching licenses and are beginning their teaching careers. They are employed in districts and schools that chose to participate in the project. Workshops on portfolio development are provided by the state agency staff. On-going support is provided by the building principal and the mentor assigned to each beginning teacher.

Required portfolio documents include a biographical data sheet, matrix of evidence, self-administered interview, feedback from administrators, and a coordinated

set of evidence. The coordinated evidence includes a list of unit objectives, three consecutive daily lesson plans, and student work with the teacher's critique. A video of a teaching episode with a narrative description is optional. Other evidence may be included, but the size of the portfolio is limited by the specification that the portfolio must not take longer than 120 minutes to review. Reflective analysis of each evidence must specify the standard(s) addressed, describe the relationship between the evidence and the standard, and explain the teacher's rationale for including the evidence.

Portfolio Documentation

The first portfolios from Project TEACH! participants ranged from a set of binders or accordion files to multiple crates of materials and portable bulletin boards, creating an urgent need to "control" the contents of the portfolio. In all three projects, requirements for documentation became more specific, and limits were placed on the quantity of evidence. Limitations were driven by the need to focus the time spent in the development of the portfolio and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the review process.

Examples of types of evidence which have been found to be useful are listed below.

- long-range, unit, and daily lesson plans from different times throughout the school year
- video of teaching with a reflective narrative explaining the teaching decisions that were made
- coordinated sets of instructional plans, student work, and a video of teaching

- classroom observation information from the principal and mentor
- student profiles
- student performance data
- reflective journals

Documentation can often be used to support more than one standard. In developing the portfolio, the teacher, with the help of the mentor, must decide how to use each piece of evidence. It can be helpful to distinguish between the standard for which the documentation provides primary evidence and other standards for which the same documentation provides supporting evidence. A matrix showing all portfolio evidences and the standards supported by each (see Appendix B) helps the teacher ensure that the portfolio is addressing all standards and presenting a balanced picture of teaching performance.

When determining the value of each piece of evidence, the teacher, mentor, and assessor will need to respond to several issues (see Appendix C).

- Is the evidence a positive or negative indicator?
- Is the evidence strong or weak?
- When taken as a whole, does the portfolio provide evidence that each standard has been met?

Lessons Learned

In anticipation of increasing reliance upon professional portfolios in teacher development and licensure, it is important to examine the results of pilot efforts to

determine the advantages of the portfolio process, concerns about the use of portfolios including costs, and strategies to strengthen the process.

Advantages of the Use of Portfolios with Beginning Teachers

When compared with induction using an effective teaching skills checklist as the focus for observation and coaching for beginning teachers, the portfolio process broadens the definition of teaching performance. If portfolio requirements and standards are clearly understood, the process does promote reflective practice for the beginning teacher, and the support provided by mentors and principals is improved.

Concerns about the Use of Beginning Teacher Portfolios for Substantive Decisions

Concerns tend to be related to two issues: the costs of portfolio development and assessment and the need for valid and reliable decisions regarding licensure and continuing employment.

Costs. In all three projects, the portfolio design was extremely costly. Portfolios required significant amounts of time. Beginning teachers in these pilot projects reported that the development of the portfolio required 150 to 180 hours. Surveys of Project TEACH! participants revealed that most teachers waited until second semester to begin preparing a portfolio that would be due in June. When teachers were required to submit three coordinated sets of data (plans, student work, etc.), even when one set came from early in the school year, at least one set was gathered at the end of the school year.

Training costs are also significant. Beginning teachers, their mentors, and their principals must understand the process up front and receive support throughout the induction program. Training for assessors must support the validity and reliability of the

process. When assessors choose not to participate in subsequent years, costs associated with assessor training became a recurring expense.

Portfolio assessment required coordination and stipends for reviewers. Should negative decisions result in litigation, legal costs become an additional expense.

Significance of the decision. The need to meet standards of validity and reliability when making substantive decisions regarding licensure and continuing employment requires careful planning and clear procedures for portfolio development and assessment. Reading and evaluating portfolio evidence requires a strong understanding of the standards and a significant amount of time. The training and level of skill required for assessors increases when the assessors are expected to go beyond a determination of whether or not a piece of evidence supports a standard and to distinguish between an adequate piece of evidence and an excellent one. It is also difficult to evaluate a single piece of evidence in isolation. The writing skills of the teacher tend to influence the assessment of the evidence, raising the possibility that a marginal beginning teacher could develop an impressive portfolio.

Strategies to Strengthen the Portfolio Process

The three pilot efforts have provided opportunities to compare a variety of procedures. Suggestions for developing an induction program using portfolios are listed below.

- Define the purpose and requirements for the portfolio clearly and in advance.

Maintain a focus on quality rather than quantity or length of components.

- Provide training in standards, portfolio development, and evaluation rubrics for beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and supervisory personnel. Recognize their needs as adult learners. Provide coaching and follow-up, and expect to address and resolve unique concerns.
- Provide support for the beginning teacher throughout the development of the portfolio. Deciding how to use each evidence so that the completed portfolio reflects performance in all areas requires an ability to view teaching as a whole.
- Involve representatives of the school district, higher education, and the state agency in the development, implementation, and continuing evaluation of portfolio projects. Such collaboration can build the capacity for stronger pre-service and in-service programs and result in smoother transitions from one level to the next.
- Consider ways to adapt the portfolio process to the needs of each beginning teacher. Specified requirements may be more difficult for teachers with unique teaching assignments. For example, lesson planning is different for an itinerant foreign language teacher who spends one class period with twenty or more classes each week and for a teacher of exceptional children who teaches all subjects to students with different disabilities who function at different levels.
- Help mentors understand their role, and provide ongoing support. Mentors must be able to assist beginning teachers in selecting and developing documentation and in linking the documentation to one or more standards. The process requires insightful decisions. Mentors can also help beginning teachers learn from mistakes and develop documentation to show improvements in teaching performance.

Implications for Staff Development

Staff development support for portfolio development and assessment involves training for teachers, mentors, administrators and supervisors. When portfolios are used as the basis for summative decisions, training must be provided for portfolio assessors, and the validity and reliability of the assessment process must be established. Portfolio assessment for summative decision-making has been found to require a high level of skill and significant time.

The Staff Development Standards developed by the National Staff Development Council (see Appendix D) provide a useful framework for the development of induction programs in which a professional portfolio will be used to document the development of the beginning teacher. The Content Standards are closely related to the INTASC Standards (see Table 1 and Appendix E), suggesting that what beginning teachers need to learn is not markedly different from the knowledge base all teachers continue to develop. However, two areas emphasized in the INTASC Standards are not specifically mentioned in the NSDC Standards: Communication and Technology (#6) and Planning (#7). Staff development for beginning teachers should include assistance in those areas.

Context and Process Standards can be used as a framework for developing and evaluating performance based teacher development. The Context Standards provide guidelines for establishing the induction program and the portfolio process within the culture of the organization. The Process Standards recognize beginning teachers and mentors as adult learners and ensure that staff development activities are continuous and carried out in a manner that responds to the strengths and needs of those involved.

Conclusions

The use of professional portfolios in induction programs for new teachers responds to the need to strengthen the development of beginning teachers and the assessment of teaching competence. The portfolio development process does support reflective practice among beginners and their mentors. Pilot efforts have demonstrated that the INTASC Standards provide a useful framework for induction and portfolio development. It is important to recognize that the use of portfolios involves significant costs. Whether portfolios are used for formative purposes or as a basis for substantive decisions, their use requires significant planning, training, and support.

Table 1

Relationship Between INTASC and NSDC Standards

	Context	Content							
	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Content Pedagogy					X	X			
2. Student Development		X				X			
3. Diverse Learners		X		X					
4. Critical Thinking					X				
5. Motivation and Management		X	X						
6. Communication and Technology									
7. Planning									
8. Assessment									X
9. Professional Development	X			X					
10. School and Community Involvement								X	

Appendix A
Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development
Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)

1. Content Pedagogy. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. Student Development. The teacher understands how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.
3. Diverse Learners. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
4. Critical Thinking. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5. Motivation and Management. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. Communication and Technology. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, non-verbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. Planning. The teacher plans instruction based on knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
8. Assessment. The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.
9. Professional Development. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. School and Community Involvement. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

APPENDIX B

MATRIX OF SAMPLE EVIDENCE

Description of Evidence	INTASC STANDARD									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Framework for Teaching Matrix										
2. Goal Assessment										
3. Long-Term Plan - Communication Skills										
4. Long-Range Plan - Science										
5. Unit Plan - Weather										
6. Unit Plan - Music										
7. Unit Plan - Reading										
8. Self Analysis of Unit Plan										
9. Lesson Plan - Math										
10. Lesson Plan - Biology										
11. Independent Assignments										
12. Video Log and Analysis										
13. Video Log and Student Work										
14. Student Work - Tornado Report										
15. Student Journal - Alternative Program										
16. Student Profile - Kelvin										
17. Student Profile - Lawrence										
18. Student Profile - Pierre										
19. Student/Parent Letter										
20. Class Rules, Contract, and Diagram										
21. Memos - Student Performance										
22. Class Testing Roster and Classroom Posters										
23. Student Learning and Growth Report										
24. Pedagogy Report - Assessment										
25. Pedagogy Report - Contributions										

APPENDIX C

EVALUATION OF PORTFOLIO EVIDENCE

1. Which standard(s) does this evidence address?

- Primary evidence?

- Supporting evidence?

2. What is the quality of the evidence?

a. Negative <-----> Positive

b. Weak <-----> Strong

3. What additional evidence would you like to have in order to make a decision that a standard is met or not met?

APPENDIX D

STANDARDS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

CONTEXT

Effective staff development...

- requires and fosters norms of continuous improvement.
- requires strong leadership in order to obtain continuing support and to motivate all staff, school board members, parents, and the community to be advocates for continuous improvement.
- is aligned with the school's and the district's strategic plan and is funded by a line item in the budget.
- provides adequate time during the work day for staff members to learn and work together to accomplish the school's mission and goals.
- is an innovation in itself that requires study of the change process.

PROCESS

Effective staff development...

- provides knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding organization development and systems thinking.
- is based on knowledge about human learning and development.
- provides for the three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.
- bases priorities on a careful analysis of disaggregated student data regarding goals for student learning.
- uses content that has proven value in increasing and relating those innovations to the mission of the organization.
- requires an evaluation process that is ongoing, includes multiple sources of information, and focuses on all levels of the organization.
- uses a variety of staff development approaches to accomplish the goals of improving instruction and student success.
- provides the follow up necessary to ensure improvement.
- requires staff members to learn and apply collaborative skills to conduct meetings, make shared decisions, solve problems, and work collegially.
- requires knowledge and use of the stages of group development to build effective, productive, collegial teams.

CONTENT

Effective staff development...

- increases administrators' and teachers' understanding of how to provide school environments and instruction that are responsive to the developmental needs of children.
- facilitates the development and implementation of school and classroom-based management which maximize student learning.
- addresses diversity by providing awareness and training related to the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to ensure that an equitable and quality education is provided to all students.
- enables educators to provide challenging, developmentally-appropriate interdisciplinary curriculum that engages students in integrative ways of thinking and learning.
- prepares teachers to use research-based teaching strategies appropriate to their instructional objectives and their students.
- prepares educators to demonstrate high expectations for student learning.
- facilitates staff collaboration with and support of families for improving student performance.
- prepares teachers to use various types of performance assessment in their classrooms.

APPENDIX E: THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE STANDARDS

INTASC STANDARDS FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS	NSDC STANDARDS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT
1. Content Pedagogy. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.	Effective staff development... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enables educators to provide challenging, developmentally-appropriate <i>interdisciplinary curriculum</i> that engages students in <i>integrative ways of thinking and learning</i>. (Content - 4) prepares teachers to use research-based teaching strategies appropriate to their instructional objectives and their students. (Content - 5)
2. Student Development. The teacher understands how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increases administrators' and teachers' understanding of how to provide school environments and instruction that are responsive to the developmental needs of children. (Content - 1) prepares teachers to use research-based teaching strategies appropriate to their instructional objectives and their students. (Content - 5)
3. Diverse Learners. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increases administrators' and teachers' understanding of how to provide school environments and instruction that are responsive to the developmental needs of children. (Content - 1) addresses diversity by providing awareness and training related to the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to ensure that an equitable and quality education is provided to all students. (Content - 3)
4. Critical Thinking. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enables educators to provide challenging, developmentally-appropriate <i>interdisciplinary curriculum</i> that engages students in <i>integrative ways of thinking and learning</i>. (Content - 4)
5. Motivation and Management. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increases administrators' and teachers' understanding of how to provide school environments and instruction that are responsive to the developmental needs of children. (Content - 1) facilitates the development and implementation of school and classroom-based management which maximize student learning. (Content - 2)
6. Communication and Technology. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, non-verbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.	

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE STANDARDS (Cont.)

7. Planning. The teacher plans instruction based on knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.	
8. Assessment. The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepares educators to demonstrate <i>high expectations</i> for student learning. (Content - 6) • prepares teachers to use various types of performance assessment in their classrooms. (Content - 8)
9. Professional Development. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires and fosters norms of continuous improvement. (Context - 1) • addresses diversity by providing awareness and training related to the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to ensure that an equitable and quality education is provided to all students. (Content - 3)
10. School and Community Involvement. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitates staff collaboration with and support of families for improving student performance. (Content - 7)



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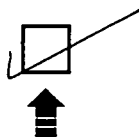
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