

# THE BUCKNELL PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT<sup>1</sup>

During your student teaching semester, you will be asked to demonstrate a variety of competencies that, taken together, ensure that you are on your way to becoming an excellent teacher. Your portfolio will be one very explicit way of demonstrating to yourself, your Bucknell supervisor, and to prospective employers that you possess the skills and abilities that are required for certification in a variety of competency areas.

The following questions are meant to assist you in the development of your portfolio.

*1) What are the primary goals of the Program Portfolio?*

Your program portfolio is a cumulative record of your learning and the development of your professional practice throughout your participation in Bucknell's teacher education program. The Program Portfolio will serve as the culminating assessment of your work in the program. The Program Portfolio is to be comprehensive with respect to the six program goals listed below, drawing on Bucknell coursework, field experiences, student teaching, and other relevant experiences. .

1. Knowledge of the Student –
  - a. The student understands how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.
  - b. The student is able to develop strategies that promote independent and critical reading skills.
  - c. The student is able to create opportunities that foster the achievement of diverse learners in the inclusive classroom.
2. Content Mastery – The student understands the central concepts and tools of inquiry in the field of education and in their own discipline.
3. Planning – The student can create effective lesson plans and unit plans and is able to monitor student progress in learning.
4. Structuring the Classroom Environment – The student is able to organize the classroom so that all learners have the opportunity to maximize their learning potential.
5. Instruction –

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<sup>1</sup> This assignment is modeled after that used by the University of New Hampshire. Much of this document draws directly from the University of New Hampshire Program in Teaching Handbook, by Michael Andrew, 2001-2002, pages 31 – 40.

- a. The student is able to use a variety of instructional strategies, communicate clearly both orally and in writing, organize and integrate disciplinary knowledge in way that promote critical thinking, and effectively use technology in the classroom.
  - b. The student is able use assessment data to make decisions about instructional strategies for individual students and the class as a whole.
6. Professionalism – The student behaves in a professional manner characterized by collaboration, support for school and classroom policies, and an understanding of standards for integrity, ethical behavior, and professional conduct.

These six program goals provide a framework for you organize and represent your growth as a teacher throughout your participation in the Bucknell teacher education program. The portfolio should document the evolution of new understandings in these areas over time, single accomplishments, and your own reflections about your learning.

The following three questions are meant to serve as guides for you in the process of developing your Program Portfolio:

*How does your portfolio make public your understanding of who you are as a teacher?*

*How does your portfolio demonstrate that you have taken the six program goals and made them your own in your daily teaching practice?*

*How does your portfolio represent your growth in relation to the six goals?*

## 2) What goes into my Portfolio?

The Bucknell Teacher Education Program Portfolio is comprised of artifacts, each accompanied by a written reflection. There are many types of artifacts that you may choose to include, for example: lesson/ unit plans, observation notes, journal entries, assessments, notes from students, and photographs, just to name a few. *For each artifact, you must include a written reflection which tells the reader what the artifact is, where it came from, why it is important to your professional development, and how it fits into your view of teaching and learning.*

In addition to the artifacts and reflections that you develop, your portfolio must also include four specific components (your adviser may provide additional instructions that will help you complete these required artifacts).

*Preface.* Your Preface should be a thoughtful essay, designed to accomplish the following purposes: (1) Introduce your portfolio and provide a rationale for why you chose to organize it as you did and (2) describe how you have addressed each of the six goals (although some may receive more attention than others) and the progress you have made with respect to each goal as you have gone through the program.

*Statement of Educational Philosophy.* Your Statement of Educational Philosophy should describe what you believe about education and why you hold these beliefs. It should make explicit the connections that exist between your educational beliefs and values, and your teaching practice as informed by educational theory. It is helpful to provide concrete examples from your classroom whenever possible. In addition, include a consideration of unresolved issues and philosophical dilemmas on which you are continuing to work.

*Curriculum Unit.* During student teaching, you are expected to plan and teach at least one extended curriculum unit. Your portfolio should contain this unit. Among the components you should include with the unit are: a rationale, a statement of goals and objectives, a description of the students, lesson plans, daily reflections, handouts, assignments, and your assessment plan. You might also include samples of student work along with your responses to this work, student evaluations of your teaching, your reflections on particular components of the unit, and your overall assessment of the unit and plans for future changes.

*Artifacts from Core Courses.* As indicated earlier, your portfolio should be comprehensive with respect to the six program goals, drawing on Bucknell coursework, field experiences, student teaching, and other relevant experience. In order to help you select artifacts from the core courses you have taken as part of your program, we have provided a list of assignment types that might be included in your portfolio. Your education professors should be able to help you decide which assignments from their courses would be appropriate for inclusion in the portfolio. You are responsible for providing a written reflection for each artifact that is included in your portfolio. Some examples of portfolio items are included in this handout.

### *3) How should I organize my portfolio?*

How you organize your Portfolio is an individual decision that you may consider (and reconsider) throughout your time at Bucknell. Criteria used to develop an organizational structure or strategy include: creative representation of who you are as a teacher, depth of reflection on your experience of becoming a teacher, clarity of expression, richness of connections between the various sections/artifacts in your Portfolio, and a sense of the direction that you will take in your future professional development. Some certification candidates might choose a metaphor or visual image to use as an organizational tool that describes their teaching; some might use the same structure as their Statement of Educational Philosophy, and still others might use the Program Goals to organize their work. The general, guiding consideration in organizing your portfolio is that it helps you make public who you are as a teacher, and helps you demonstrate your growth and accomplishments relative to the six Program Goals. (Remember that the rationale for how you have chosen to organize your Program Portfolio should be explained and elaborated in your Preface).

### *4) What are artifacts? Where do they come from?*

An artifact can be virtually anything that represents some aspect of your teaching practice or some aspect of your growth and development as a teacher. Artifacts may be things that are “produced” by you (e.g. your curriculum unit) or things that are “found” in your teaching practice (e.g. a piece of student work or a note from a parent). Other examples of artifacts include sample lessons and assessments, papers written for education or other classes, selected journal entries, notes from observations of you or by you, video or audio tapes accompanied by transcripts of relevant passages, and photographs or any other representation of your teaching or learning. Artifacts can come from any aspect of your teaching or learning.

### *5) How many artifacts should I include?*

Since each artifact may demonstrate more than one goal, or fulfill more than one purpose in your Program Portfolio, there is no predetermined requirement for the number of artifacts included in the final document. Instead of thinking about how many artifacts you include in your Program Portfolio, consider what you need to include in order to create a rich and detailed picture of who you are as a teacher, and how this representation might also demonstrate the extent to which you have met the program goals of Bucknell’s Teacher Education Program. Your supervisor will give you feedback on this question (and others, of course), as you develop your Program Portfolio.

*6) How do I reflect on an artifact? What makes a reflection good?*

It is crucial that your reflections go beyond simply describing the source or nature of the artifact to which they are attached. A good reflection begins with such a description, as an introduction or identification of the artifact, but then goes on to delve more deeply into the meaning and significance of the artifact as a representation of your professional practice. Focus on why you decided to include this particular artifact, what you want readers to see by looking at your experience through the lens of this object. Consider each reflection a thoughtfully crafted explanation of the rationale for including the relevant artifact. The length of these reflections may differ according to the artifact (some may require more explanation than others), but one to three pages is a good place to start.

*7) When should I start working on my portfolio?*

From your very first course (either in education or in other disciplines) you should begin to save materials that highlight your growth. As the Program Portfolio is implemented, you will find your Bucknell instructors referring to it in their syllabi, highlighting certain assignments that might be very useful as artifacts (either directly or as the initial thoughts that lead to more precise work). Throughout your coursework consider saving particular pieces that have helped you develop certain competencies, to think differently about yourself as a teacher, to think critically about the position of the learner, and to think more deeply about the role of schools in society. As a general rule, you should save all materials that you create during your teacher education curriculum, particular those that arise from required courses. Having such a record of your educational development will serve you well as you start to formalize your Portfolio during your senior year when you student teach. It is important to have work from all stages of your development as a teacher, beginning with classes you have taken in education or in other disciplines, and culminating in work created and used during your student teaching. Gathering these artifacts and beginning to reflect on them, as well as thinking about how to structure and organize your Portfolio, is an ongoing task and the student teaching seminar will provide a focal point for the process.

*8) How will my portfolio be assessed?*

In assessing your program portfolio, program faculty and supervisors will examine the extent to which you (1) provide the reader with a clear rationale for why you have organized and presented your portfolio in the way that you have; (2) address the six program goals; (3) show growth and creative risk-taking; (4) demonstrate your awareness of the complexities of teaching through in-depth reflection on your professional practice; (4) Articulate a vision of teaching which is coherent and consistent across the various components of your portfolio. Recommendations for certification are contingent upon the completion of a portfolio that receives your student teaching supervisor's approval.

*9) Who will see my portfolio?*

Your supervisor and adviser (these may be the same person for some individuals), your cooperating teacher(s), and other interns in your seminar will be the primary audience for your portfolio. Once you have completed your Portfolio, we will ask for a photocopy of your work to keep on file in the Education Department office as documentation of your completion of this aspect of the Bucknell Teacher Education Program. These become the official record of your work in the program and may be shared with supervisors, other faculty members, or members of state or national accreditation teams as a part of our effort to reflect on and improve the program. In addition, there is a portfolio exposition that will take place near the end of your student teaching semester. During this exposition you will be expected to be available to display

and explain the contents of your portfolio to members of the education department, other student teachers, and students preparing to teach.

During your student teaching seminar, you will work with other students and with your supervisor to develop ideas about what kinds of materials might be most effective in proving your competency in each of the required areas. With the addition of your resume, transcript, and clearances in the front, your portfolio should be ready to show employers as you interview for teaching positions.

## **Creating Your Portfolio**

### ***Possible Artifacts in Each Category***

#### **Possible Artifacts for Your Portfolio**

This list is meant to provide examples of possible artifacts. Please bear in mind that this is not an exhaustive list and many other possibilities for artifacts exist.

#### **Knowledge of the Student**

- Field experience paper where knowledge of development was applied to classroom observations.
- A reflective entry on how your knowledge of student development (social, language, cognitive, and/or moral) was used to explain certain behaviors, learning difficulties, etc. in a student you tutored, etc.
- Materials that demonstrate the implications of a specific theory of development or learning for classroom teaching, e.g., course paper, lesson plan with explanation, videotaped lesson.
- Copies of materials with explanation illustrating your knowledge of child development, e.g., journal excerpt, examples of student work, PowerPoint presentation, videotaped course presentation.

#### **Content Mastery**

- Copies of materials that demonstrate content mastery, e.g., course papers, critiques of educational research, theoretical proofs, concept maps, unit and lesson plans.
- Description of a theoretical stance on reading instruction that most closely fits your views with your reasons for the position.
- Textbook analysis; what's covered and what's not and areas where misconceptions could result.
- Analysis of textbooks in relation to content area standards.

#### **Planning**

- Sample unit plan highlighting the connection between planning and assessment.
- Graphic representations of unit content.
- Sample lesson plans highlighted by captions pointing out particular areas of evidence, e.g., activating prior knowledge, use of technology, cooperative learning and set-up, critical thinking questions, differentiated instruction, etc.
- Sample lesson plans highlighting the connection between objectives/goals and assessment.
- Records of how materials were selected for a unit or lesson.
- A sample of a modified assessment tool used with diverse learners.

## **Structuring the Classroom Environment**

- Field experience paper analyzing the environment of a classroom observed.
- A description of your policy and procedures for managing your classroom.
- A statement of your philosophy of classroom management and discipline.
- A diagram, floor plan, or photo of a classroom arrangement and explanation of how this arrangement facilitates instruction and management.
- A description of a situation in which you successfully changed inappropriate student behavior to on-task behavior. Explain what happened and what was learned.

## **Instruction**

- Videotape, with explanation, illustrating different teaching strategies.
- A web illustrating your repertoire of strategies used for instruction, a rationale for selection of these strategies, and results of such instruction.
- A videotape demonstrating your teaching with a written explanation of what is on the video and your analysis of the instruction.
- Samples of graphic organizers used during instruction.
- Pictures with captions of students engaged in learning activities.
- Copies of K.W. L. charts and a record of adjustments made to plans as a result of the charts.
- Samples of student work before/after your instruction.

## **Professionalism**

- List of memberships in professional organizations.
- Description of leadership positions held.
- Evidence of degrees, honors, awards, or recognition received.
- Evidence of self-initiated volunteer work, special projects, programs (e.g., speakers, study trips) and participation on committees related to education.
- Research, articles, papers written or co-authored.
- Letters from administrators commenting on your professional qualities: responsibility, reliability, punctuality, attitude, etc.
- Evidence of parent communication, e.g., samples of newsletters, notes, progress reports, responses to parent concerns, notices, e-mails.