

The Inherent Tensions in the Multiple Uses of Portfolios in Teacher Education

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Educators of teachers have two essential ethical and legal responsibilities. One is to support the development of the teachers with whom they work. The other is fundamentally one of accountability and plays itself out in policy arrangements between the state and teacher education institutions (e.g., credential and accreditation). These two responsibilities of any teacher education program contain an inherent tension: How to provide supportive opportunities for learning while simultaneously being accountable to the standards set forth by the licensing agencies?

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The tension between support and accountability in teacher education is manifested in the increasing use of teacher portfolios as an assessment tool. On the one hand, portfolios can serve the function of supporting the growth and development of teachers. In this regard, they become a reflective tool providing student teachers with opportunities to engage in rigorous inquiry about their professional practice.

On the other hand, portfolios are also being used for the purpose of evaluating whether candidates meet licensure standards. Portfolios, therefore, are being used both as a series of supportive opportunities for learning and to evaluate candidates' competence. This paper addresses the tension that arises from the use of portfolios both as a tool for inquiry into personal practice in the professional development of pre-service teachers and as a means of evaluation in their licensure. As one student teacher questioned, "Is this [portfolio] for my growth as a student teacher or is this for the program's purposes to say to the state, 'Yeah, these guys should get a credential?'"

The context of the study is the Teacher Education Program at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB), an institution with approximately 100 candidates each year for elementary, bilingual, and secondary teaching credentials. It is a fifth-year, post-baccalaureate program which also provides the option of receiving a Masters Degree in conjunction with professional preparation. The program recognizes the competing needs embodied in the use of portfolios and thus has designed two distinct portfolios, specifically addressing each of the two functions portfolios can serve.

The Teacher Education Program at UCSB requires a portfolio documenting the successful initial attainment of the standards of teaching codified in state credentialing requirements, the "credential portfolio." This portfolio is developed over the course of the credential year and is organized around specific licensure standards. Explicitly, these standards intend to define what "good" teachers need to know and be able to do in order to work effectively with students and their families. This type of portfolio responds to an external pressure for better assessments to increase the probability of responsible and responsive practice (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992). Furthermore, the credential portfolio offers the promise of a more appropriate authentic performance assessment (Tierney, 1992). However, because the credential portfolio starts with externally defined standards and is used as a means of evaluation, it tends to be a collection of artifacts which portray one's work in its most glorious light (*e.g.*, "proving" that the candidate has demonstrated competence of state-defined teacher standards).

The initial fear among some UCSB teacher educators was that this use of the portfolio for high stakes evaluation and licensure would supersede the use of a portfolio as a workspace charting the growth of a teacher through open and honest reflections on the struggles and inevitable failures common to the learning process (Bird, 1990). In response to these concerns, the UCSB teacher education program designed a second type of portfolio, the "M.Ed. portfolio." This is the culminating project required for a Masters of Education degree. Whereas the credential portfolio is built around externally-imposed standards, the M.Ed. portfolio is born from the issues that are generated from a candidate's work in schools. It is designed to be a developmentally-appropriate tool for ongoing reflection to support professional growth (Grant, 1994; Lichtenstein, *et. al.*, 1992). The M.Ed. portfolio is designed to encourage reflection on individual practice, focusing on the growth process over

time to support a candidate's ability to "learn from teaching."

The questions with which we are struggling are whether or not there are ways to use portfolios *both* as a tool for inquiry into personal practice in the professional development of pre-service teachers and as a means of evaluation in their licensure. Does the portfolio's use as a summative evaluation override its use as a strategy and process to make visible one's own practice for the purpose of reflection and inquiry? Can both external and internal needs be met simultaneously, and, if not, what is lost?

Methodology

The data to analyze these questions have been collected over the course of two years following two cohorts of student teachers through their professional preparation year and, with a sample of 18 candidates, into their first year of teaching. Data were derived from formal program review documents, focus group interviews, and tape recordings of three-way credential portfolio meetings and M.Ed. support group sessions. Program review documents consisted of course evaluations, supervisory evaluations, graduate perception surveys, and student advisory committee feedback. Focus group interviews, involving pre-service teachers and first year teachers who graduated in the first cohort group, specifically asked participants to distinguish between the different portfolios, citing their experiences with each. Feedback from program faculty and school site personnel involved in the support and instruction of pre-service teachers was also collected. In addition, presentations of portfolios and analyses of artifacts selected for inclusion in the portfolios—including the candidates' personal written reflections on their growth and development as teachers—have been analyzed.

Initial analysis consisted of organizing collected data into the naturally occurring categories of "Credential Portfolios" and "M.Ed. Portfolios." Those categories were then further analyzed using constant comparative and discrepancy analysis techniques until data was distilled into the findings presented. As will be seen, this level of analysis resulted in the "letting go" of the original categories and the construction of new ones. In addition, unanticipated outcomes emerged and were analyzed—primarily seeking verification from multiple sources and across developmental levels of teachers. Perhaps the most insightful analysis was more "practice" oriented in that over the course of the past two years we have been in the midst of on-going construction of the use of portfolios in the teacher education program. We would: (a) come up with a plan; (b) begin to implement the plan; (c) reflect on what was happening (usually in small group discussions among college and school-based teacher educators); (d) make in-course adjustments grounded in our data-based reflections; and (e) begin the process anew.

Context

To understand our findings, then, requires a general overview of the process

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context of the research. We began solely with a credential portfolio. In the first year of program-wide use of portfolios, the criteria were the ten outcome standards¹ outlined by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), the state credentialing agency. These ten standards were listed on a grid down the left side of a page. Across the top of the grid were written the categories of sources of evidence, types of artifacts, that students could consider to document their meeting of the state-defined standards: (1) test or test-like events; (2) observations; (3) performance/work samples. This resulted in the following 3x10 grid the students used to guide their artifact collection and selection.

Credential Portfolio Matrix

State Competency	Test or Test-Like Event	Observations	Performance/ Work Sample
Student Rapport Classroom Environment			
Curricular and Instructional Planning Skills			
Diverse and Appropriate Teaching			
Student Motivation, Involvement and Conduct			
Presentation Skills			
Student Diagnosis, Achievement and Evaluation			
Cognitive Outcomes of Teaching			
Affective Outcomes of Teaching			
Capacity to Teach Crossculturally			
Professional Obligations			

Students were to collect artifacts, primarily from their professional preparation year, documenting their growth over time in each of the state standards. They had ongoing opportunities to share their emerging portfolio contents weekly in supervisory seminar groups (from September through June); in December at the end of their limited student teaching placement in a three-way conference with their cooperating teacher and college-based supervisor; in late January at the inception of their full-time student teaching placement in a three-way conference with their cooperating teacher and college-based supervisor; and then in a summative evaluative format in June, once again in a three-way conference where the cooperating teacher, college-based supervisor, and the student "signed off" on an official looking form verifying that all three parties agreed that the collection of artifacts provided compelling evidence that the student had met all state outcome standards. Thus, the initial purpose of our portfolio work was accountability, assessing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions possessed by our students in order to assure the state (and ourselves) that the credential candidates were capable of working with students and their families in a responsible and responsive manner.

Embedded in the matrix are three essential conceptual assumptions. First is the notion of *multiple sources of evidence*. Test and test-like events are defined as tasks assigned by others to be completed within a set frame of time (e.g., papers for a class, a standardized achievement test, a curriculum unit developed as an assignment, etc.). Observations are defined as the record of what other people note when they watch the student teacher in action (e.g., notes from a supervisor's observations, comments from a cooperating teacher, a principal's evaluation, a colleague's notes from peer coaching observations, etc.). Performance/work samples are defined as direct evidence of a student teacher's work (e.g., video-tapes of the student teacher's classroom, lesson plans and reflections on the implementation of the lesson plans, student work resulting from a lesson, notes from parents, actual student teacher communications with families and other school personnel, etc.).

This way of thinking about multiple sources of evidence distinguishes the approach we used with the approach used by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which defines what must go into a portfolio. By our definition, because everything that enters an NBPTS portfolio is assigned by another to be completed within a set frame of time, NBPTS teachers would only "fill in" one column of our matrix. In this regard, the successful NBPTS portfolios would not have met our credential portfolio requirements. The difference between the two is that while the NBPTS portfolio and our initial attempts at a credential portfolio were both accountability driven, they differ in underlying notions of reliability and validity. Both models result in the making of decisions about "competence," but the NBPTS model requires candidate comparison across common tasks (an aggregative approach). The initial UCSB model, more like the academic evaluation of a dissertation, required that candidates collect, select, and reflect upon *different* tasks (an integrative approach). (See Moss, 1994, for a thorough and elucidating exposi-

tion of the distinction between the two.) Rather than view this wealth of knowledge as variables to be controlled for comparative consistency, we viewed it as an advantageous opportunity to assess teachers with the same caliber of context specific information that teaching itself requires (Snyder, *et. al.*, 1993; Darling-Hammond, *et. al.*, 1993). In our first implementation of the credential portfolios we countered reliability issues by having a minimum of five (two cooperating teachers, two college-based teacher educators, the candidate) perspectives involved in evaluating the work.

The second assumption embedded in the matrix is that accurate information for assessment purposes requires that data be collected *over time*. Teacher educators and school site professionals have the luxury of working with student teachers over an extended period of time. The development of a candidate's work, as well as the candidate's thinking about that work, can be charted throughout the course of the credential year within the constructs of the credential portfolio. Furthermore, student teachers are provided multiple opportunities to reflect on their work over time across different contexts (at least two different field placements, university courses, small collegial cohort groups, etc.), and this provides a rich foundation for analysis on the part of the candidates, as well as for the teacher educators and school site professionals who work with them.

The third conceptual assumption embedded in the matrix we designed was that it was appropriate to *use externally defined categories* (e.g., state standards) as the criteria of good teaching. We adopted the standards used for licensure in the state of California to which we, as a teacher education program, were being held accountable. We felt that these standards provided articulate learning outcomes for teachers and credential candidates and were therefore appropriate for us to use as the bases for the credential portfolios. In addition, because we felt it fair to our students to let them know in advance the criteria by which they would be evaluated, within the first week of the program, we provided them with the state's written explanation of the standards and engaged students in an activity to help them construct their own understandings of those standards.

Over the course of the past three years of using portfolios, the first two assumptions have proven to be powerfully useful. The third assumption met with early concerns that grew as we used portfolios with our students. One major concern was that externally defined categories were limiting our students' ability to construct their own sophisticated knowledge, skills, dispositions, and ways of thinking about teaching. For instance, some students' portfolios exhibited a mechanistic understanding of teaching which was antithetical to the constructivist pedagogy of the program. The philosophical argument emerging from such disconcerting empirical data was that if we, as a program, provided opportunities for thoughtful practice and practical reflection, our students would generate equally appropriate, generally consistent, higher caliber, and more personally valuable "standards" of their own.

In the spring of the first year of the credential portfolio one instructor, sensing the value of the first two assumptions but concerned with the third, created an assignment for her class which she labeled an "issue portfolio." For this assignment, students chose an issue from their work with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations and documented growth over the course of the year in their knowledge and practice. Because most of the artifacts used had already been collected for the credential portfolio, the notion of multiple sources of evidence collected over time was built into the structure of the assignment. Yet, because this issue portfolio was developed around what for them was an issue that beat at the heart of their work, the external standards and the mechanistic tendencies of the Credential Portfolio Grid were eliminated. While the issue portfolios were not of universally exceptional quality, enough of them were to suggest that it might be worth developing a portfolio specifically designed to promote personal inquiry. The experimental issue portfolios, therefore, provided justification and motivation to pursue the development of a kind of portfolio primarily driven by the student teachers' own issues and passions. This, and historical circumstances, led to the development of the M.Ed. portfolio, distinct from the credential portfolio in both design and purpose.

In 1994-95, the approval of a Masters in Education degree provided the impetus to create a portfolio different from the credential portfolio, one that was not necessarily tied to state standards. The M.Ed. portfolio is the culmination of the Masters program of study. It is built around an inchoate passion that is derived from a candidate's work in schools and is developed over the course of thirteen months to seven years. Early in their professional preparation year, students take an ethnography course to begin developing their ability to collect data in natural settings. Through a series of workshops and field-based experiences, students refine and focus their passion—moving between abstract questioning and reflecting upon the concrete artifacts they have been collecting in their field experiences and in their coursework. By January of the credential year, students are asked to bring in three artifacts that may help them identify their issue(s). They look at their practice *vis-à-vis* these artifacts and from this emerges a grounded theory. Throughout the M.Ed. portfolio process, they continue to move back and forth between theory, self reflection, and practice as represented by artifacts and reflection on practice. By March students form self-selected support groups and are assigned a university or school-based facilitator. These support groups meet regularly with the purpose of informing and being informed by each other of their thinking/practice regarding *their* issue and the evidence they have selected to document their growth over time. In the summer (June/July) following their full-time student teaching experience, students complete their M.Ed. Portfolio.²

The framing of the M.Ed. portfolio retained the first two of the conceptual assumptions of the Credential Portfolio Grid: that students were to collect multiple sources of evidence to support their analysis of their growth as a professional

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educator over time. However, as the externally defined categories of the credential portfolio had been eliminated, we found the need to create a set of criteria that could help frame the work that we were now asking the candidates to pursue. This resulted in the following guidelines:

Criteria and Guiding Questions for M.Ed. Portfolios

I. Composition

What is the big idea? The framing issue?
How is the portfolio organized so that its major themes are understood?
What makes the portfolio coherent?
What was your process (before, through, and beyond) of working with the big idea?
What teaching/learning incident(s) led you to the big idea? (e.g., include any lesson plan, journal, student work, text, etc. that led you to this theme)
Are the common threads of the portfolio clear?

II. Power of the Big Idea/Theme

How deep is the idea?
What is its significance to the social world?
How is this idea connected to the field?
What other educators have similar concerns/ideas? (through educational literature? other teachers with whom you have spoken?)
What is its significance to teaching and learning?
How does your thinking about this big idea/theme effect/support the way you go about teaching?
How does the idea reach into the student experience?
Where is the area of greatest growth?

III. Growth Over Time

How have the questions about the big idea/theme changed?
How has the way you think about these questions changed?
What incidents, experiences may have contributed to this change?
What lessons were learned from "limited successes?"
What problems were growth providers? How?
What evidence is there of changed techniques? Attitudes?

IV. Implications for Future Growth

What interesting questions are raised?
How has this work shaped plans for future growth?
How will this work affect the teaching and learning of the candidate? Of his/her students?
How will the candidate go about finding answers to essential questions?

Successful completion of the M.Ed. portfolio consists of two checkpoints. First, the group facilitator and every member of the support group must give their approval to the document produced by the candidate. Once approved by the group, students schedule a public conversation where they receive feedback on their

portfolio from five critical friends. Candidates select their critical friends so that the following five perspectives are present: (a) a school-based educator who knows the candidate well (*e.g.*, one of their cooperating teachers); (b) a school-based educator who does not know the candidate well (*e.g.*, a principal, a teacher they respect); (c) a university-based educator who knows them well (*e.g.*, a supervisor); (d) a university-based educator who does not know them well (*e.g.*, a content expert or researcher in their issue); and (e) a person who represents the parent perspective. The purpose of the public conversation is to engage in a powerful discussion about important ideas related to teaching and learning. It is not about the portfolio itself, but rather the ideas and implications embedded in the collection of artifacts.

By expecting candidates to complete two different portfolios from the same collection of artifacts, the program is using portfolios for both educative and accountability functions. The inherent tensions in the multiple uses of portfolios as assessment for support and as assessment for evaluation are summarized in the chart that follows.

	Support (M.Ed. Portfolio)	Evaluation (Credential Portfolio)
Purpose	Support of individual candidates	Program accountability and high stakes decisions
Entry-point—organization	Student issues and concerns	External standards
Use	Tool for collaborative and reflexive inquiry	Means of self and external evaluation
Artifacts	Greater emphasis on “why” artifacts such as theory-based reflections, educational literature	Greater emphasis on “what” artifacts such as classroom exemplars that fit standards
Outcomes	Clarification of issues central to one’s own work; exploration of essential tension in teaching	Understanding and establishing competence in credentialing standards over time

In the following section we analyze what did, and did not, in this context, make a difference in the abilities of neophyte teachers to learn from teaching.

Findings

The value of the portfolio processes, as evidenced by the successful meeting of the criteria and by student feedback, proved to be related to reflection possibilities constructed over time more than to the function or the audience of the portfolios.

Reflection

One of the themes of the UCSB Teacher Education Program is reflection. From the onset, we have maintained that one of the primary functions of both the credential and the M.Ed. portfolios was to enhance sustained hard personal looks at oneself and one's practice. We wanted the portfolios to improve and document our students' belief in the importance of looking critically at themselves, the skills that enable that process to happen, and the wisdom to change what one can to improve one's professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Our concern was that the kind of reflection we sought was not a given of the human condition (Bolin, 1988). Were our portfolio processes providing students the kind of learning opportunities required?

Our students did not share this concern—which is perhaps one indication that we provided learning opportunities which they did take up to enrich their abilities to reflect. One student commented, "I can't imagine that a teacher can't, in some way, shape, or form, say how they have progressed and what they have learned. Isn't reflection saying, 'I have learned this?'" Another indicator of the students capacity to take up the portfolios as reflexive opportunities is exemplified in this student comment made during her final "defense" of her credential portfolio in a June meeting with her supervisor and cooperating teacher:

I feel like a lot of this year I've been learning how to undo what I've learned before—like my impression of what a teacher was. I thought a teacher was a lecturer. That was how I was taught—rows and a person who hands you a book and you read it and you spit back what you read.... I knew that I had never been involved in teaching the way I wanted it to be, the way it should be.... So I'm unlearning the ways that I make sense of what I know.

Growth Over Time

The kind of reflection exemplified above was made possible because both portfolios required that candidates document thought and practice as they co-evolved over time. In order to make their own growth visible to themselves, students needed to collect, select, and reflect upon concrete evidence of how they were thinking and what they were doing at various points throughout, at least, their professional preparation year. This meant making the portfolios a safe place to include less successful teaching episodes. By insisting that candidates show evidence of growth over time, they were encouraged to look back upon lessons that might be considered "failures" and to reflect upon how they would now teach that lesson differently, in light of subsequent teaching experiences, learning, and their new understandings about the students with whom they were working.

I kept the bombs...I had to look at what I did...good and bad.... I felt like that was what I was supposed to do. So I tried to find the ones that were bombs and the ones that were good to compare and contrast. It was almost like rather than saying,

"Show your competencies," it was "Show your growth in this area." ...The purpose of this is not to show perfection in any of these things, it is to show your change in practice and thinking over time.

When students were allowed the luxury of failure, they could explicitly articulate their own growth. In this way they became more able to build on their strengths, gained a greater control over their own development, increased their motivation to learn from their mistakes, and enhanced their potential for continual professional development.

One of the big things...I felt afterwards was, "Wow!" Because when I went in the program I really had very little experience and I didn't know anything, really, about teaching. And then when I finished and looked and saw what I'd done, I had a real sense of competence.

It is really hard for me to say, "This is a great lesson." It is easier for me to look at the things I am working on...to look at the first times I tried it and then later on. When I did that, I felt real...satisfaction seeing how it had improved each time. It was the lessons that didn't work so well that I really learned from.

Personal or Public Entry Point?

Our programmatic portfolio discussions never called into question the value of reflection or the time required for the changes to occur in order to provide students opportunities to reflect upon growth in their thinking and practice. Our debates centered around the initial locus of control for collecting and selecting the artifacts which would become the grist for that reflection. Essentially, advocates of the credential portfolio argued for an external entry point into reflection because: (a) it was unfair to make high stakes assessment decisions (e.g., credential decisions) without informing students of the criteria; (b) the state standards were not merely hoops to jump through, they were the result of the combined wisdom of tradition, practice, and research; and (c) the credentialing/accreditation process embodied in those standards was an essential element of democratic institutions such as public schools and universities. As one graduate noted, "You don't want to just throw out the ten competencies. I mean, I don't feel comfortable with completely throwing them out and hoping that somehow you created a competent teacher."

Advocates of the M.Ed. portfolio essentially argued for an internal entry point for reflection because beginning with the external: (a) would limit the creativity of students; (b) would inhibit student ownership of their own work; (c) was inconsistent with the constructivist philosophy espoused by the program; and (d) devalued and limited the opportunities for teacher educators to use their context specific knowledge and expertise. Another graduate summarized this position when she remarked,

The (credential portfolio) never seemed real to me because...it was just something external coming down on me. I was looking around for the perfect little lesson, the

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perfect little unit to stick in.... Teaching is an ongoing process and you're always trying to improve by reflecting. So when I was doing the (credential portfolio), I couldn't stand it because I don't feel like I've perfected anything at all.

Over the past several years, we as teacher educators have had the opportunity to observe artifacts of our practice and reflect upon what they mean about our own growth in thinking about teaching and learning. As one student capsulized for us, the entry point was less a factor than the opportunities to reflect over time: "The whole notion of it being over time is what is useful because it makes visible those different benchmarks in your own learning.... And if it came from the ten competencies or if it came from you...doesn't make that big of a difference. That may just be preference." Both an internal and an external entry point enhance learning from teaching as long as the key process variables of reflection over time are present—and neither enhance one's goals if reflection over time is not present.

For some students, the external entry point was of value.

See, if you're talking about establishing a continuing rapport (a state standard), you can't just show a letter that shows you've established rapport. You have to show an anthology of letters that is the continuing rapport—with the teachers, parents, students, and whoever you're talking with.

I like the grid. I am a grid person.... I'm very proud of the credential portfolio. I own it. I was collecting it all year and we got to discuss it lots of times.... And the fact that I typed up each competency and really reflected on it made me really realize what I learned all year, what it was that I focused on, and what I got out of the program. It was like, "Wow, I am competent in these areas and this is what I learned. This is why I can be an educator." I guess that's what I got out of having all those different competencies. I saw a bunch of different areas that I grew in and I reflected on because I had this list of things. I like having the criteria that I have to meet so I know some guidelines, have some guidance...

I think sometimes those sorts of competencies make you look at things that you might not think of. Like maybe I wouldn't think about professional growth.... But it would make me look at that and then look at my own teaching and say, "What's going on?" I mean, what are those guidelines for? I understand what they mean now. When I first tried those last year, they didn't make much sense to me, and now they do.

For other students, the internal entry point was of value—and in fact, they usually began with the internal, even for the externally defined credential portfolio.

I just took all my lessons and fit them into the categories (the state defined competencies). I didn't guide what I did by those categories, but I tried to see how, reflect upon how, they fit. It gave me a way to reflect. In other words, I could take this lesson and really read through it, reflect on it, and I could see it really fit into this competency and why. And then reflect on why I chose it. I learned something from that. But I didn't change anything I did to fit into those competencies. I took whatever I wanted and reflected on where it went afterward. I picked a lesson...and then took it to the grid—not from the grid to the lesson.

In short, though the audiences and functions of the two portfolios differed, students linked the two. For instance, in the following excerpt from a portfolio conference, it is not until the very end that it becomes clear she is “defending” a credential portfolio (in December). In this comment, she is explaining why she asked her students to complete a report card on her performance as a teacher, an issue she identified as important to her.

I was curious about what they thought about my teaching and (I wanted) to show them that I was willing to take a risk and let them grade me.... The day before I asked my students to evaluate me, my cooperating teacher had asked them to evaluate themselves. I rarely ask the students to do something that I haven't done or to do something I'm afraid of or uncomfortable or unwilling to do. I was very pleased and impressed with the way parent-student conferences were going...but there was still something missing from this process. My rationale behind asking students to complete a report on (me) was to show students that just as they were willing to allow others to give them grades, I was willing to be graded. I knew that it was difficult for students to be receiving grades, but I also wanted to let them have the experience of grading someone and to realize this is difficult also. I was looking forward to their input on my teaching. To complete the evaluative process, I recorded my self evaluation prior to reading their report cards. Like the self-evaluations and the report cards of students that my cooperating teacher constructed, my self-evaluation and students' report cards of me showed similar strengths and goals. That students were able to be honest and express their beliefs about my teaching illustrates their trust.... Students observed me taking a risk and consequently they were prepared to take risks. These report cards show me that there is mutual respect between the student and myself and they illustrate Student Rapport (a state competency) in our classroom environment.

One of the only differences between the two types of portfolios was in the nature of the artifacts selected to document their growth over time. The M.Ed. portfolios, starting with a personal issue, often included educational literature (e.g., university-based “traditional” research, school-based action research, and conceptual articles) as a backdrop to the evidence documenting a candidate’s growth. To date, not one of the credential portfolios has included educational literature. Starting with the personal/subjective in the M.Ed. portfolio led into a larger public dialogue with the world beyond one’s own classroom practice more often than did starting with the public/objective criteria of the credential portfolio.

In simplest terms, both portfolio processes involve collecting artifacts from multiple sources over time, selecting artifacts for particular purposes and audiences, and using those artifacts as tools for reflection (making one’s own growth explicit, moving between levels of abstraction). Our initial hypothesis was that the different purposes and audiences for the portfolios would not effect collection, but selection and reflection would differ greatly between the two. In fact, neither collection nor reflection differed in any substantive manner and the selection differences (e.g., proving oneself competent versus documenting growth over time)

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seem to be narrowing as students and faculty become more familiar with the use of portfolios.

Unanticipated Outcomes: Connecting With Teaching

Though we wanted to believe that students would learn from how we structured the program and take up comparable practices in their work with their students, prior to the research presented here, it was an ephemeral belief. Until we systematically and rigorously studied performance samples of our students we could not know if, or understand the process through which our students were learning from, how we structured the program and how we taught our courses. In short, both portfolio processes helped teachers connect their self-assessment with their assessment practices with students.

I thought it was interesting that the things I put in my portfolio, I put in not only because they make me feel good, but because they are an example of a program I would like to create in my future classroom. (student teacher)

I think it would be more beneficial if you collected stuff, reflected on it, then made a goal. Then a few months later, saw if you met that goal, and reflected on it (and so on).... I've done this.... The students are collecting a portfolio and I... have them go through their work and say, "OK this is the language arts one. Take out your best writing piece, take out your worst writing piece.".... Then they write about why they are the best and the worst and what their goal is in four months for their writing. "What would you like to see yourself do?" So it is used as a goal setter for them and at the end of the year they can see if they have progressed in a way they wanted to progress. (first year teacher)

In fact, some of our students' work with their students dealt with the same issues with which we were dealing as teacher educators and helped inform our thinking and practice. As one of our graduates pondered, "I was just doing (portfolios) for the kids, but should I really be focusing on the state? Or if I focus on the kids, will it naturally work for the state and how? You know, are they really two different portfolios?"

Unanticipated Outcomes: Program Improvement

Another programmatic benefit of portfolios is their use as a feedback mechanism for program improvement. For instance, certain classes traditionally receive low student evaluations and we have a sense that they are not "working." Yet, many students used knowledge, skills, and dispositions gained from those courses in their portfolios. Conversely, some classes we think of as successful did not show up in portfolios at all. In program breast-beating sessions we share our concerns about what our students are not getting. Once again, there were occasions when content we thought they were not "getting" would end up in the portfolios. In these cases, the portfolios made our program more visible to us as well as illuminated the

developmental nature of teaching. That is, perhaps our students "did not get" something in December, but by June, with additional experiences, they exhibited a high level of achievement. Finally, the portfolio processes included cooperating teachers and other school-based educators in their development and ultimate structure. We did this from a sense of their value to us and to our students. An unanticipated outcome is that their "helping us" develop and carry out portfolio assessment also served educative functions for them. As a result of their portfolio work with us and with our students, they gained a greater understanding of our program, its philosophy, and how it works. This increased understanding enhanced the cohesion between college and school based experiences for our student teachers, which in turn enriched our students' experiences in both settings. In addition, teachers took up the "content" of both portfolios to make their own practices visible to themselves. In fact, many (if not a majority) of cooperating teachers are now constructing their own portfolios. Some schools with whom we work are taking on teacher portfolios as a school-wide effort.

Conclusion

The tension between assessment for support and assessment for high stakes decision making will never disappear. Still, that tension is constructively dealt with daily by teacher educators throughout the nation. Teacher educators both support their students and deliver high stakes accountability evaluations. Given the developmental and context-specific nature of the teaching/learning process as well as the need for over-time/in-depth observations, it may be that the accountability function of a portfolio cannot be separated from the support function. If the information with which to make a major decision can best be gained through the context-specific relationships and conversations inherent in an over-time support role, how can one defend a high stakes decision without access to such information? In other words, while a support provider does not have to be an evaluator, an evaluator may have to be a support provider. As has always been the case in effective teacher education programs, accurate evaluation may not be separable from support.

Our study indicates that efforts to combine the dual purposes of support and accountability in portfolio development do not always result in a constructive tension. It appears that an essential element to using the tension constructively is the belief that a key ingredient in the process of learning from teaching is the maintenance of a diverse collection of process artifacts which represent work over time. This collection of artifacts is then used to make one's practice visible and becomes a basis for reflection in order to understand and improve one's teaching. From the collection, different artifacts can be selected, organized, and presented in different portfolios for different functions and different audiences. In this way, but not without peril, teaching, learning, assessment, and evaluation can support each other. When collections of the artifacts of teaching and learning from multiple

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sources of evidence collected over time are used for both functions, they give teacher educators better tools to support the growth of students, better information to make responsible decisions about credentialing that students and families deserve, improve the assessment practices of teachers, and provide rich data for improvement of teacher education programs.

Notes

1. When the state adopted The California Standards for the Teaching Profession in 1996, the program began using the new teaching standards rather than the standards outlined above.
2. Some students postpone completion of the M.Ed. portfolio, electing to give themselves another year or two in the belief that additional experience and reflection will enrich their portfolio, their teaching, and the learning of their students. The program holds a series of Saturday workshops through the subsequent year(s) to support the growth of these students. Despite the logistical problems and the unpaid time and labor demands of this model, it remains the preferred choice of the program faculty to work with beginning teachers who have been in their own classrooms prior to the M.Ed.

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