



## **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Successful completion of the Northern Plains Transition to Teaching program requires the submission of a Professional Portfolio at the conclusion of the licensure courses (EDCI 552 through EDCI 559) and prior to recommendation for licensure. An additional Comprehensive Portfolio is required of those NPTT students who have opted to enroll in the Master of Education (Curriculum & Instruction option) degree program. While some of the requirements for the Comprehensive Portfolio are identical to those required for the Professional Portfolio, please be aware that the rigor and subsequent scrutiny of the Comprehensive Portfolio reflects the increased level of expectation for advanced degree (master's) level work.

The Professional Portfolio (or licensure portfolio) requires teacher candidates to provide documentation for or responses to nine items. Completion of the requirements for the Comprehensive Portfolio for the master's degree will require that students address fourteen criteria some of which are also required for the Professional Portfolio.

In many cases, those working on a master's degree will apply for Full licensure before completion of their degree seeking Program of Study requirements. In this case, students will be submitting two different CD-Rom portfolios at two different times. However, all of the material from the first licensure-only CD-Rom portfolio will still be required on the second Comprehensive Portfolio CD-Rom. Master's degree seeking students should therefore save all of the materials submitted for licensure and submit these materials a second time along with the remaining materials that will make up the Comprehensive Portfolio.

The instructions below will require some interpretive judgment. Students should do the best they can to understand what we are asking for, and why and then provide the best responses, and evidence, that will demonstrate professional mastery under each item. The prescribed length of essays is intended to give an approximate guideline for how compact and concise the writing should be. It is okay to vary from those recommendations as long as students are writing in a careful and professional manner.

### **FORMAT**

- All essays and information should be written in a careful and well organized manner. Work from an outline, think carefully, work from a basis in research, best practice, and evidence, and build up your essay in a way that reveals clear, systematic, and professional thinking.
- Each page should be double spaced, with 1 inch margins all around. Use a conventional font like Times New Roman or Ariel, and 12-point font size. All requirements follow APA formatting guidelines.

- APA format is required for all documents created in the preparation of the portfolios. Be familiar with and use the formatting guidelines identified in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (latest edition).
- You are **REQUIRED** to use references and citations. When you reference other people's work, use appropriate forms of citation (refer to APA Publication Manual). Be very careful to identify other people's work and to distinguish it from your own. If you use student's work, you may protect their identity by use of pseudonyms or a generic identifier, such as "10<sup>th</sup> grade student".

In the essays, students should mention what they have learned, how they have grown professionally, and then supplement those essays with evidence, such as examples of their work or student work when appropriate. This should all be graduate level quality. That means a clear distinction is made between personal opinions on the one hand, and evidence, research, reason, and so forth on the other. Overall, the portfolio should give persuasive evidence that students have learned to think through the medium of formalized research, best practice, and professional expectations, ethics, and judgment.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

What follows below are the specific items and criteria that must be addressed in the Professional Portfolio:

### **PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO (FOR LICENSURE ONLY)**

1. **One page professional biographic narrative with photo.** This is a one page personal autobiographical sketch written in third person narrative. It should include information about who you are, where you came from, your education and professional path, your migration into teaching, and any personalizing information such as family, hobbies, and so forth. Include a nice picture of yourself and basic contact information. These bios come in handy when we try to point potential hiring agents your direction, but more importantly they help to create a sense of the real person behind all those files full of 'evidence' and artifacts, thus personalizing the portfolio and allowing your reviewers to see you as a kindred soul.
2. **Current Vitae.** This is the Latin word for "Life." It is referred to in other occupations as a Resume. This is your professional life, educational and work history, and other information pertinent to your existence as a professional person.
3. **One page description of your current teaching context:** This is a one page or shorter description of the context in which you live and work. It should be written in first person narrative, and should include a description of your community, its demographics and economic base, etc, and then a description of your school, the subject(s) and grades you teach, the size of your school and classes, and anything else that helps your reader 'see' you in your professional world as a teacher.
4. **Philosophy of Education.** (3-5 pages, double spaced). What are the 'core values' and 'deep understandings' that motivate and guide you professionally as a teacher? How do you understand the relationship between individuals and society, the relationship between individuality and the common good? How do you understand your role in the work of learners and that of the school? How do people learn? How should we teach? Describe how you approach the work of converting subject matter into teachable materials, how you think about and perform the various instructional activities, and generally how you understand your role in the lives of your students

with respect to their growth, development, and the discovery of their talents and their uniqueness as learners and as people. One of the things professional teachers eventually do is to reflect upon their core beliefs and to consider how those beliefs manifest in their own professional practice. This aspect of professional practice coincides to some degree with a more formal exercise conducted by philosophers as they consider various aspects of education, humanity, knowledge, teaching, learning, socialization, life, purpose, meaning, and so forth. Almost by definition, philosophical questions are complex problem spaces that do not admit of a simple, finished answer. Typical questions are, “What is the nature of knowledge, and how does it relate to its referents?” “Is there a discernible, universal ‘human nature’? If so, what is the nature of humankind?” “What makes life worth living?” “What is the difference between education and indoctrination?” “Who in society is capable of receiving the best education?” “Who should control what goes on in the classroom?” These and other questions cannot necessarily be answered definitively, but as you seek to answer them you reveal much about what you value, what you take for granted, and what your purposes are for becoming a teacher. In this assignment, reflect upon your core beliefs as they pertain to teaching and then describe your own personal philosophy of education. (You do not have to answer all of these topical elements; they are provided for the sake of guidance only). If you have the ability to tackle the more substantial philosophical questions (the nature of knowledge, issues of ethics, etc) you are welcome to do so, but not required to do so.

**5. Classroom Management** This section on Discipline and Management should include an essay (3-5 pages double spaced), and may include any supplemental materials that help present your approach to classroom management, behavioral management, etc. The NPTT program emphasizes something deeper than is implied by these terms – the creation of authentic, supportive learning communities. Describe how you manage the social environment in your classroom, how you maintain order and academic discipline, and how you have dealt with specific kinds of social and behavioral problems this past year. Be mindful of the difference between “theory and ideals” on the one hand, and “actual practice” on the other. The two are related, but not identical. What is your system of management, and how has that evolved since the beginning of this NPTT Program?

In this assignment you are asked to summarize what you have learned about managing a classroom. We are especially interested in evidence that you have gone beyond a mechanical supervision of processes and have at least begun to recognize the potential for a classroom being a learning environment where all of the processes, social conditions, procedures, rules, expectations, etc. promote a positive and purposeful community of learners. Some teachers dictate, some teachers lead, some teachers defer to their students, some teachers abdicate their responsibilities... describe how you actively govern your classroom to ensure it becomes a place where all students are affirmed and encouraged to learn. Attend to issues of behavioral management, management of the social climate, governance issues, procedural issues, and so forth. Begin by stating your vision and goals; then describe what you do to meet those goals; then discuss the professional resources you have drawn upon to inform your efforts.

**6. Cultural and Ethnic Diversity** (3-5 pages, double spaced). Write a general overview. Additional supplemental materials and artifacts are welcome. Diversity answers to ‘a diversity of diversities,’ as we said in EDCI 553. People differ in substantial ways, and no two people (even ‘identical twins’) are the same. We are particularly interested in those aspects of human difference that make a difference in the classroom. Race and Ethnicity,

Linguistic and Cultural diversity, Gender and Sexual Orientation, Social Class and Economic Background, and all other forms of difference that define human identity on any kind of group basis. Describe how you think about the tension between the mono-cultural orientation that is often presumed in public, and the multi-cultural reality we often discover in our classrooms. Discuss both your general viewpoint and your actual approach within your classroom (many teachers have trouble reconciling the two). Then, discuss specific examples of how you have 1) utilized a variety of cultural and ethnic resources to enrich your teaching, and 2) how you have demonstrated responsiveness to the diversity within your own classroom. Give examples, and feel free to include appropriate work samples and other artifacts that help build the case that your teaching and your classroom have been responsive to student diversity. Do teachers have ethical obligations that guide us through the tensions between cultural unity and multiculturalism? How do you personally and professionally navigate these complexities?

**7. Assessment.** (Write a general overview essay, 3-5 pages, double spaced). In recent years, educators have tried to move the use of assessment from an instrument that systematically ranks students to an instrument that contributes to an ongoing formative cycle of feedback and further progress. No Child Left Behind actually begins with every teacher understanding the status of each student's current levels of achievement. Assessment now stands as a tool that helps promote better learning by informing the judgment of both the teacher and the learner. In your essay, and in your other included artifacts, you need to demonstrate an understanding of how this may be done, and give specific examples of how you have used assessment for diverse purposes and in a manner that is responsive to the uniqueness of your students. Give examples and provide samples of your assessments and student achievement showing that you are effectively reaching all students. [Notice category 19 where you will demonstrate 'all students learning']

**8. Exemplary Curriculum Unit.** Provide your best example of a well-designed unit of instruction you created and taught. Include information (and samples) of the assessments you used to ensure that all students were learning.

**9. Course Archive for EDCI 552 EDCI 559.** As set forth in EDCI 552 the expectation has been for you to 'tidy up' each written assignment you have completed in each course, and then archive all of those assignments. Hopefully, you have done just that. In these eight sections, create a folder for each course, and then deposit those revised assignments into these folders. Be sure the assignments are numbered to refer to the lessons they represent, and in APA format. This will permit our auditors or accreditors to verify completion of course assignments.