

THE TEACHER EDUCATION PORTFOLIO: AN
INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-SERVICE
TEACHERS' GROWTH?

By

LISA DIANE DOZIER HOLDER

Bachelor of Arts
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Alva, Oklahoma
1984

Master of Education
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Alva, Oklahoma
1989

Submitted to the Faculty of
the Graduate College of
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
December, 2004

COPYRIGHT

By

Lisa Diane Dozier Holder

December, 2004

THE TEACHER EDUCATION PORTFOLIO: AN
INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-SERVICE
TEACHERS' GROWTH?

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Kathryn Castle

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Pam Brown

Dr. Gretchen Schwarz

Dr. Linda Leavell

Dr. Virginia Worley

Dr. A. Gordon Emslie

Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I wish to acknowledge and thank all the participants who agreed to take part in my study. Without their cooperation and willingness to help, this research would not have been possible. Next, I express my deepest appreciation to all the influential and wonderful people who have helped me along the path to my degree. After the first course I took at Oklahoma State University – Analysis of Teaching with Dr. Castle – I became ‘hooked.’ Every class and instructor since that time has influenced me in ways I once thought unimaginable. And I especially wish to thank my outstanding committee members who helped make my doctoral experience exciting, highly educational, and truly meaningful.

To Dr. Castle, thank you for helping me begin my journey in such a positive way and for sticking with me as a committee member. Your influence and kind words of encouragement will not be forgotten. To Dr. Brown, thank you for your positive support and gentle nudges to go “above and beyond.” Your enthusiastic love for learning has certainly influenced me. To Dr. Leavell, thank you for your constant willingness to work with me, especially after coming on board at such a late stage in my coursework. I truly appreciate your kindness.

To Dr. Schwarz, thank you for advising me through my beginning years and for remaining with me along the way. I value your insight and sincerely thank you for your constant understanding and encouragement. Finally, to Dr. Worley, I give heartfelt

gratitude. Words are inadequate to properly thank you for the countless hours you spent working with me and advising me through the dissertation process. Thank you for your patience and perseverance. I learned more than I thought possible through the course of writing the paper, and I will always be grateful for your constant guidance and care.

To my co-workers and friends, thank you for your unwavering encouragement and for listening when I needed you. Knowing I had such an outstanding support system helped me make it through the tough times.

Finally, to my children – Adam and Andrew – thank you for allowing me to take time from your lives to fulfill one of my dreams. You two are the best, and I am so blessed to have such understanding boys. I am so proud of you both. You mean the world to me, and I love you with all my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Emergence and Growth of the Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio	3
Emergence and Growth of Oklahoma’s Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio	6
Oklahoma’s Mandated Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio: A High-Stakes Endeavor.....	9
Interpretive/Constructivist Epistemological Stance	12
Problem Statement/Purpose	14
Research Questions	15
Theoretical Lens	17
Significant of the Study	18
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	22
Definitions and Uses of the Education Portfolio.....	23
Portfolio Models.....	25
The Educational Portfolio as an Evaluation Instrument.....	27
Origins of the Portfolio in the Educational Realm	29
Advantages and Disadvantages of the Teacher Education Portfolio	32
Advantages of Portfolios	33
Disadvantages of Portfolios.....	35
Portfolio Theory vs. Portfolio Practice.....	40
III. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	43
Methodology: Attitude Analysis as a Methodological Tool	44
Part I: Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire: Participants, Data Collection And Data Analysis.....	46
Participant-Researcher/Instructor	46
Participants-Instructor PAQ	47
Participants-Pre-Service Teacher PAQ	47
Data Collection-Instructor and Pre-Service Teacher PAQ.....	48
Data Analysis – Instructor and Pre-Service Teacher PAQ.....	51
Part II: Focus Group: Participants, Data Collection and Data Analysis	52
Data Collection- Focus Group.....	54
Credibility of Data Collection and Interpretation.....	56

Chapter III - continued	Page
Ethical Issues	57
IV. DATA ANALYSIS – PART I, THE PORTFOLIO ATTITUDE	
QUESTIONNAIRE (paq) “Students are traumatized by the process”	59
The Cost Associated with the Portfolio.....	63
Cost: Pres-Service Teacher PAQ	63
Portfolio Cost	64
The Time Associated with the Portfolio.....	65
Time: Instructor PAQ.....	66
Reading and Scoring	66
Preparation and Instruction	67
Pre-Service Teachers’ Time	67
Time: Pre-Service Teacher PAQ.....	68
Poor Time Investment	68
The Organization of the Portfolio	69
Organization: Instructor PAQ	70
The Portfolio in General.....	71
Electronic Portfolio	71
Helpful Organizational Structure	71
Unsatisfactory Organizational Structure	72
The Reflection Associated with the Portfolio	73
Reflection: Instructor PAQ.....	74
Reflection as Valuable.....	74
Point of Confusion and Frustration	75
Reflection: Pre-Service Teacher PAQ.....	75
Reflection as Valuable.....	75
Questioning Reflection.....	76
Frustration with Professors’ Evaluations of Reflections	76
The Portfolio as a Mandated Instrument	78
Mandate: Instructor PAQ	78
Oklahoma Mandate	79
Mandate: Pre-Service Teacher PAQ	79
Confusion Concerning the Portfolio Mandate.....	79
Questioning the Portfolio Mandate	80
The Portfolio as a High Pressure Mechanism	80
The Portfolio as Miseducative.....	80
The Portfolio Competencies	81
Competencies: Instructor PAQ.....	82
Competencies as Helpful.....	82
Competencies as a Frustration.....	83
Competencies: Pre-Service Teacher PAQ.....	83
Competencies as a Frustration.....	84
Mastery of Competencies	84

Chapter IV - continued	Page
Competencies as too Prescriptive.....	84
The Portfolio’s Educative Meaning and Value	85
Educative Meaning and Value: Instructor PAQ.....	86
The Portfolio as Having Educative Value	86
The Portfolio as Having Little Educative Value	87
Educative Meaning and Value: Pre-Service Teacher PAQ.....	88
The Portfolio as Having Educative Value	88
The Portfolio as Having Little Educative Value	88
Discussion of Data Analysis.....	90
V. DATA ANALYSIS PART II – THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER FOCUS	
GROUP	93
The Cost Associated with the Portfolio.....	98
The Time Associated with the Portfolio.....	100
The Organization of the Portfolio	102
The Reflection Associated with the Portfolio	103
The Portfolio as a Mandated Instrument	105
The Portfolio Competencies	107
The Portfolio’s Educative Meaning and Value	110
The “Benefits” of the Portfolio	112
Discussion of the Data Analysis.....	114
VI. FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	119
Findings.....	121
Blocked Access to Knowledge.....	122
The Prescriptive Nature of the Portfolio	124
The High Stakes Nature of the Portfolio	125
The Portfolio Viewed Through Dewey’s Concept of Education as Growth.....	127
Implications	131
Recommendations	134
REFERENCES	137
APPENDIXES	144
APPENDIX A – OKLAHOMA GENERAL COMPETENCIES FOR	
TEACHER LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION.....	144
APPENDIX B – COMPETENCY ORGANIZATION AT THE AUTHOR’S	
UNIVERSITY	147
APPENDIX C – RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE	150

APPENDIXES – continued	Page
APPENDIX D – RESEARCH QUESTIONS – FOCUS GROUP	154
APPENDIX E – FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION FORM.....	155
APPENDIX F – CONSENT FORM FOR PAQ	156
APPENDIX G – FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT	160
APPENDIX H –COMPILED ANSWERS TO THE PAQ – STUDENTS	191
APPENDIX I –COMPILED ANSWERS TO THE PAQ – INSTRUCTORS ...	219
APPENDIX J—PORTFOLIO SCORING PROTOCOL	226
APPENDIX K—INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD	227

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Benchmarks, Evaluations and Consequences	10
2. Instructor and Student PAQ Questions	50
3 Focus Group Questions	55
4. Instructor and Student PAQ Questions	61
5. Focus Group Questions	94

CHAPTER I

Introduction

“A really nice doorstep”?¹ (Appendix H)

My immersion into the world of educational portfolios began with a simple phone call: would I like to serve on a committee examining a rubric for the area university’s² pre-service teacher portfolio? Being completely naive about the ramifications an affirmative reply would yield, I hesitantly responded that I would help. At that time I was employed as a basic skills instructor at the local career technology center, and the last thing on my mind was pre-service teachers and their requirements for graduation. That soon changed.

At the first committee meeting, I was told that I would review nine completed portfolios and score them according to a provided rubric, all within two days. I quickly learned that the committee’s purpose was to determine the rubric’s effectiveness – could a group of people look at a given portfolio and score it similarly? My job was not to pass

¹ I will begin each chapter with a pre-service teacher quotation (from my gathered data) which expresses a view toward the portfolio.

² This four-year university has two main campuses that lie approximately 70 miles apart. The main campus (at which I teach) is located in an Oklahoma town with the approximate population of 6,000. The university’s enrollment is approximately 1,500 per year. The other campus is in a larger city with the population of 47,000 and university enrollment of approximately 500 per year.

or fail individual portfolios; in fact, the pre-service teachers would never see the rubrics the committee had completed. Therefore, my task appeared simple enough – until I began looking at the portfolios and accompanying rubrics. Terminology bombarded me. Words such as “competency” and “artifact” were foreign to me in this new context. Then, I looked at the guidelines for the portfolios themselves: the 15 state competencies plus a competency the university added. What did these competencies mean? They seemed full of jargon and complex sentences and expressions. Realizing that the pre-service teachers had to complete this competency-based portfolio before becoming teachers certainly interrupted my own view of the process of becoming a teacher, for I had completed nothing like it in my teacher education program.³

I will never forget that feeling of ignorance and helplessness surrounding my first encounter with the pre-service teacher portfolio. Perhaps this initial negative experience on my part is why I listened attentively to the pre-service teachers’ voices of frustration concerning the portfolio, when the next year I accepted a position in the teacher education department at that same small Oklahoma university. Listening to their concerns – along with the concerns of my fellow professors – caused me to question the Oklahoma mandate for the teacher education portfolio and to wonder how the portfolio affects pre-service teachers. Additionally, I questioned the implication of that outcome on both the professors and the pre-service teachers. Although I was already familiar with the concept of the portfolio through my language arts background, since many of my former English colleagues had used portfolios to evaluate student writing, the pre-service teaching

³ Although many use the terms “teacher education,” “teacher preparation,” and “teacher training” interchangeably, I will use the term “teacher education,” following John Dewey’s (1944) contention that education is completed with thoughts and actions; whereas training is automatic, often done without thought or emotion; and preparation is too future oriented. See Chapter 2 for a more complete discussion.

portfolio appeared to be an entirely new instrument. What I failed to realize when I first heard negative comments about my university's portfolio is that these remarks were, in fact, evaluations of the portfolio. In light of these evaluations from professors and pre-service teachers and in light of my initial experience with the pre-service teacher educational portfolio, I could only question its purpose and effectiveness in the teacher education program. To attempt to understand the purpose of the portfolio, it became important for me to see how it emerged and grew in teacher education.

Emergence and Growth of the Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio

The portfolio is a familiar term in many professions, including art, architecture, commercial arts, music, modeling, photography, and journalism (McMillin, 2001; Porter & Cleland 1995; Salvia, 2004). A portfolio is “a portable case for holding material, such as loose papers, photographs, or drawings; and the materials collected in such a case, especially when representative of a person's work: a photographer's portfolio; an artist's portfolio of drawings” (American Heritage Dictionary). Tierney, Carter and Desai (1991) point out that those in professional settings use the portfolio as “tangible evidence of accomplishments and skills that must be updated as a person changes and grows” (p. 43), and the portfolio's use in the education profession did not become popular until the 1970's and 1980's with the renewed emphasis in the teaching of writing (Ward & Murray-Ward, 1999; Wyatt & Loper 1999). While portfolios have emerged quite recently in many curricular areas and are, as Lyons (1998b) points out, still “in their infancy” (p. 247), today, educators use portfolios in most subject areas, even in such

traditional academic areas as science and math, to “document student effort, growth, and achievement” (Salvia, 2004, p. 255).

The portfolio for use in university teacher education programs is an even more recent addition to the educational realm in the United States. Portfolios in teacher education grew in the 1980’s as a reaction to the alarming education report, *A Nation at Risk*, (1983) which called for broad reforms in education, with a primary emphasis on improving teacher quality (Lyons, 1998a). After this report, “reformers recognized the critical need for good teachers, well-grounded in their subject matter, in child development, and in effective learning strategies that could challenge children to their highest achievement” (Lyons, 1998a, p. 2). Additionally, Lyons (1998a) states that school reformers “saw at last that teachers, with their students, were at the heart of their enterprise and that any school reform needed to go hand in hand with the reform of teacher education” (p. 1). The portfolio for assessing in-service teacher professionalism eventually grew from such requirements as specified in this report. To address the reforms called for in *A Nation at Risk*, two other reports leading to the evaluative portfolio for in-service teachers focused on the issue of teacher professionalism: the Holmes and Carnegie reports. The Holmes Group suggested a new structure for teacher requirements with appraisal at three levels – subject matter examinations, observations of teachers’ practice using portfolios and exhibitions as well as spot observations (Lyons, 1998c). In 1986 the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession suggested the creation of a national board for professional teacher standards (Lyons, 1998c). From this report grew the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), a board with public school teachers comprising the majority of its membership (Lyons, 1998c).

Before developing its own portfolio for the certification of teachers, the NBPTS (1991) created its statement of policy with five propositions known as “What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do”: (1) Teachers are committed to students and their learning; (2) teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to their students; (3) teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; (4) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and (5) teachers are members of learning communities. In order to assess these propositions, the NBPTS invited Lee Shulman of Stanford University and his newly developed Teacher Assessment Project (TAP) to create an appropriate format for the assessment of the national certification of teachers. From this study grew the portfolio for teacher professionalism (Lyons, 1998c), and the portfolio became the means for authorities to assess these “propositions.”

This new measure of professionalism, the portfolio, then trickled down from assessing in-service teachers to the colleges of education themselves, and as Wyatt and Looper (1999) point out, “Many states are now requiring teacher education graduates to develop a teaching portfolio” (p. vii) to ensure highly qualified future educators. It is interesting to note that the portfolio is a professional addition to the education arena without any clear connections to pre-service teachers’ growth, yet many universities also utilize the portfolio as evidence for meeting National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requirements.

Emergence and Growth of Oklahoma's Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio

Because the portfolio can be an instrument that helps institutions meet the requirements of NCATE, since it is a means of presenting evidence that institutions are meeting the required standards, many states, including Oklahoma, mandate a portfolio for pre-service teacher education. Further, pre-service teachers must successfully complete the portfolio to earn certification and licensure. Specifically, the members of the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation⁴ best explain the connection between the portfolio and the Oklahoma state requirements for accreditation on their website:

The institution requires all initial and advanced certification candidates⁵ to develop a portfolio which documents a candidate's accomplishments, learning, and strengths related to the competencies, standards, and outcomes established by the Commission, State Regents, SDE [State Department of Education] and institution. For purposes related to institutional accreditation [NCATE], the portfolio presents evidence that the institution is providing initial, on-going, and focused opportunities leading to student achievement of competencies, standards, and outcomes determined by the Commission, Regents, SDE and institution (Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, Accreditation).

The Oklahoma State Board of Education implemented the portfolio on July 1, 1997, in answer to the May 1996 Legislative House Bill 1549 requiring that the state

⁴ It is interesting to note that Oklahoma's independent standards board for teacher education, Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP), contains the term "preparation" in its title. I will discuss the differentiation among the terms "preparation," "training," and "education" in more detail in Chapter 2.

⁵ Both NCATE and OCTP use the term "candidate" to describe a student enrolled in an education program. I will leave the term "candidate" in state and national language quotations; however, when using my own voice, I have consciously chosen the term "pre-service teacher" as it better fits with John Dewey's philosophy of education as growth which guides my study.

adopt a competency-based teacher education program (Wyatt and Looper, 1999).

Members of the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP) state their purpose for mandating the pre-service teacher education portfolio on their website:

As part of each [pre-service teacher's] educational experience, a portfolio is developed that emphasizes Oklahoma's General Competencies for Licensure and Certification. Candidate portfolios provide an opportunity for teacher candidates to critically evaluate [sic] what teachers need to know to be successful and to consider different types of learners and school environments. The activities and field experiences, which are described and reflected on in a candidate's portfolio, demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions teacher candidates acquire during their teacher education (Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, Portfolio Assessment).

Elementary teachers (including Teacher of the Year finalists), elementary principals, and professors of teacher education created fifteen competencies for the Oklahoma portfolio, originally intending to evaluate teachers already in the field (Wyatt and Looper, 1999). These competencies are the basis for the teacher education portfolio, a means of "judging" pre-service teachers' competency in these 15 areas. The 15 competencies are entitled the "Oklahoma General Competencies for Teacher Licensure and Certification," with the first 10 competencies based upon "Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development: A Resource for State Dialogue" prepared by the Council for Chief State School Officers' Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). Oklahoma educators developed competencies 11 through 13, and competencies 14 and 15 are based on already existing

Oklahoma laws (Wyatt and Looper, 1999). [See Appendix A for complete listing of Competencies]. The 15 competencies are a part of each Oklahoma institution's pre-service teacher portfolio requirements (Wyatt and Looper, 1999). The Oklahoma legislature mandates that teacher education "candidates" seeking state certification address all fifteen competencies in a portfolio format, and the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation enforces this mandate. The mandate's purpose is to ensure that the teacher "candidates" are able "to meet the demands of the classroom by reaching the mandated specifications for competency" (Wyatt and Looper, 1999, p. vii).

Although professors at my university list the competency (or competencies) each course fulfills in their syllabi, the portfolio remains the primary instrument through which pre-service teachers document their mastery of the competencies. Each university in the state has a degree of flexibility concerning the portfolio's organization. For example, the education department at my university added a final competency, competency 16: "The candidate researches and analyzes major contemporary problems in public education." Further, at my university, the arrangement of the competencies is slightly altered from the original 15, for here the portfolio is divided into four sections: section one contains general information about the candidate, including the candidate's autobiography, test scores, field experience forms, transcript(s), and resume; section two, entitled "Learners and the Learning Environment," contains the first four competencies; section three, "Instruction and Assessment," contains competencies five through nine (with competencies five and six both having a sub-competency); and section four, "The Professional Environment" includes competencies 10 through 15. For each artifact the pre-service teachers present, they must write an accompanying reflection explaining why

they chose the artifact and how the artifact helped them understand and meet the particular competency. [See Appendix B for the complete listing of the competencies as they are arranged at this university].

Oklahoma's Mandated Pre-Service Teacher Portfolio: A High-Stakes Endeavor

Because the portfolio in Oklahoma is the primary instrument through which pre-service teachers, education programs and institutions demonstrate that they meet state and national expectations and standards for quality, the portfolio for pre-service teacher education in Oklahoma is a high stakes, evaluative endeavor for the pre-service teachers, the teacher education programs, the higher education institutions, and by extension, the professors. The pre-service teachers at my university develop and maintain a portfolio and move through four steps, or “benchmarks,” in order to graduate and earn certification and licensure.⁶ For each benchmark, the teacher education faculty members complete an accompanying rubric to determine each pre-service teacher’s level of proficiency. This rubric contains six levels of proficiency (“zero” through “five”) for each competency, and the pre-service teachers must achieve a “two” or above in order to pass the competency benchmark.⁷ The pre-service teachers cannot proceed from one benchmark to the next until passing the previous one. I list the benchmarks at my university, benchmark requirements, evaluations, and consequences of failing the benchmark in the following table

⁶ In Oklahoma, the institution grants certification while the state grants licensure.

⁷ See Appendix J for my university’s rubric at the time of data collection. Note, since I collected the data, my university’s rubric has changed. The rubric now has five levels of proficiency, and the pre-service teachers must achieve a “one” or above in order to pass the competency.

Table 1
 Benchmarks, Evaluations and Consequences

Benchmark	Due Date	Requirements	Evaluation	Consequences
Benchmark 1	Due upon completion of Introduction to Education course.	Completion of Section 1 and at least one artifact in any of the competencies.	Any teacher education faculty member can review and sign off.	Pre-service teacher must revise until approved in order to proceed to Benchmark 2.
Benchmark 2	Due 2 weeks before interview that allows pre-service teachers to be admitted into teacher education.	Updating of Section 1 and completion of four artifacts in any of the competencies.	Interview conducted by three education faculty members.	Pre-service teacher not admitted into teacher education until benchmark passed with all revisions completed.
Benchmark 3	Due before pre-service teacher student teaches.	Updating of Section 1, including adding evidence of passing score in at least one Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT). At least one artifact per competency.	The student's advisor and one other teacher education faculty member must sign off at this benchmark.	Pre-service teacher may not student teach until benchmark passed with all revisions completed.
Benchmark 4	Due during finals' week of last semester before exit interview.	Addition of 7 artifacts from student teaching, as well as updating/revising other artifacts as needed. "Best practices" stressed.	Interview conducted by three teacher education faculty members	Pre-service teacher will not graduate and cannot apply for certification until benchmark passed with all revisions completed.

The portfolio is also high stakes for the education programs in Oklahoma universities. Like the professors and administrators in many other teacher education programs, my university's education division members seek to maintain NCATE accreditation and state accreditation. The portfolio is a large part of the accreditation process because the accreditation reviewers often look at the pre-service teacher portfolios to determine the education programs' strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions. Thus, the portfolio becomes a high stakes endeavor for the education program, the instructors, and the pre-service teachers. If the education program fails accreditation, it can lose official approval, meaning in Oklahoma that a university can lose a program if it loses state and national accreditation. Loss of accreditation might eventually lead to closing down the education program altogether, causing the instructors potentially to lose their jobs and pre-service teachers to lose the opportunity to take teacher education courses at that university.

As an instructor of education in a small, Oklahoma four-year university, I hear many negative remarks from fellow teacher educators and pre-service teachers concerning the portfolio. Many of the pre-service teachers with whom I come in contact see the portfolio as another "hoop" through which to jump with no long range benefit gained from their investments in the portfolio process. One pre-service teacher even called the finished product "a really nice doorstep." Although initially I considered these complaints to be "typical" student dissatisfaction, I noted several events that caused me to question the effectiveness of the portfolio as an educational process: students were not picking up their portfolios after their final interviews; recent teacher education graduates continued to voice their frustrations about the portfolio; and rumors surfaced that several

students had left the education field solely because they did not want to complete a portfolio.

If the pre-service teachers view their portfolio work as a “doorstop” or a barricade preventing potentially good teachers from becoming educators, how useful is the portfolio, and what is its actual purpose? Recalling the state’s purpose for mandating the pre-service teacher education portfolio, does the portfolio truly demonstrate to state and national accreditors that the graduating pre-service teachers are competent and that the education program and certificate granting institution “produce” enough graduates who meet state and national competencies/standards to warrant the program’s and institution’s accreditation? If the pre-service teachers do not perceive the portfolio in its present form to foster their growth (in education)⁸ and their competence as teachers, why should such states as Oklahoma require portfolio implementation? Whether the portfolio actually fosters growth or not, for the most part it seems the pre-service teachers perceive that it does not. Thus, if they perceive that the portfolio is of no educative value, then they will perceive that it does not foster their growth.

Interpretive/Constructivist Epistemological Stance

Harry Wolcott (1995) asserts that theory is essential to the pursuit of qualitative research and is a precursor to any purposeful human activity. Agreeing that theory in research is extremely important, Mertens (1998) is more specific than Wolcott: “A researcher’s theoretical orientation has implications for every decision made in the

⁸ I use the term “growth” to describe the numerous factors which contribute to the pre-service teachers’ educational journeys. I will connect this “growth” to education in the discussion of Dewey’s idea of education as growth later in this chapter.

research process, including the choice of method” (pp. 3-4). Since my purpose in conducting this study was to discover the attitudes toward the portfolio in order to determine its role in pre-service teachers’ growth, I set up my study using the interpretive/constructivist paradigm as defined by Mertens (1998).

First, a connection among the researcher and participants is key to effective data collection in the interpretive/constructivist paradigm. Mertens (1998) explains that in this paradigm the researcher and those she is researching interlock in an interactive process, each influencing the other (Mertens, 1998). In my research, this connection is strong, for I teach or work with many of the participants involved in my study; I work at an institution where accreditation is highly valued. In my institution’s teacher education program, as in all Oklahoma teacher education programs, this accreditation is closely connected to the pre-service teacher portfolio. Significantly, I help implement the very instrument whose purpose and method of implementation I question. I realize that in the truest interpretive/constructivist sense, objectivity is better replaced by confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Mertens (1998) stresses, “The assumption is made that data, interpretations, and outcomes are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the researcher and are not figments of the imagination” (p. 13). She further claims that in this paradigm, validity in research must be proven through a variety of methods for data collection. Using existing research, the questionnaire, and the focus group for data collection, I have data from the participants in its original sources to validate and confirm my findings.

Additionally, the interpretive/constructivist theory incorporates qualitative data gathering through interaction between and among investigator and respondents (Mertens, 1998). The interpretive/constructivist researcher typically wants to know the meaning

which participants attribute to certain activities using a hermeneutic approach, “Hermeneutics is the study of interpretive understanding or meaning” (Mertens, 1998, p. 11). More specifically, van Manen (1997) calls this type of research “hermeneutic phenomenology,” or “a human science which studies persons” (p. 6). According to van Manen (1997), phenomenology is the “systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience,” (p. 10) for research conducted as a human science study is, in fact, searching for the very nature of a phenomenon. According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, a “phenomenon” is “an exceptional, unusual, or abnormal person, thing, or occurrence.” The portfolio at my university has indeed turned into an exceptional occurrence of great magnitude, a phenomenon.

Problem Statement/Purpose

Because at my university completing the portfolio requires much of the pre-service teachers’ time and effort, one would think the portfolio should be an instrument that supports and enhances the pre-service teachers’ growth during this portion of their educational journeys. However, at my university, instructors and pre-service teachers maintain that portfolio completion yields little or no educational pay-off, a position contrasting sharply with researchers’ and portfolio developers’ overall support of the portfolio process. To discover why this contradiction exists, I seek to learn how those involved firsthand with the teacher education portfolio – the professors and the pre-service teachers – evaluate the portfolio. As a human science researcher, I seek to deepen

my understanding of the everyday experience of education professors and pre-service teachers as they move through the portfolio process and to determine if the portfolio is indeed an instrument that supports pre-service teachers' growth even if pre-service teachers and their instructors are unable to perceive this growth while in my university's program. If this high-stakes instrument is not a means of growth, then what is its purpose? Is it merely a scrapbook or a "really nice doorstep"? Does it hold educative meaning and value for the pre-service teachers?

Research Questions

Because in many research projects multiple realities exist, the research questions cannot be "definitively established before the study begins" (Mertens, 1998, p. 14); they may develop and progress as the study advances. Based upon instructors' and pre-service teachers' comments and concerns at my university, I began my research with six questions that later evolved into the questions I used for data collection⁹:

1. What are the attitudes of pre-service teachers at [my university] toward the mandated portfolio?
2. What are the attitudes of teacher educators at [my university] toward the mandated portfolio?
3. How have the portfolios been beneficial to the pre-service teachers' teacher education?
4. What causes the most frustration for pre-service teachers and teacher educators in the portfolio compilation process?

⁹ I list the data collection questions in Chapter 3.

5. What do the pre-service teachers and teacher educators foresee as the usefulness of their portfolios after graduation?
6. What are possible suggestions the pre-service teachers and teacher educators might make to improve the portfolio process?

In order to learn answers to these questions, I created two Portfolio Attitude Questionnaires (PAQ's), one for the instructor participants and one for the pre-service teacher participants [See Appendix C for complete questionnaires]. I wanted input from the instructors at my university to see if their views toward the portfolio corroborated the pre-service teachers' views and to gain any added insight. I planned to use data from the PAQ as the basis for posing more poignant questions to pre-service teachers in a focus group. Therefore, after examining the answers to the PAQ's, to learn more about portfolio compilation in a more "focused way," I formed a focus group to expand upon topics which most frequently occurred in the PAQ seeking to learn if the literature, the PAQ responses, and the focus group responses would triangulate. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the triangulation process as validating each piece of information against at least one other source and/or a second method. They stress, "No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated" (p. 283). I also wanted further to explore contradictions and "new" concerns about the portfolio which might arise in a conversational setting. Therefore, I determined that the addition of a focus group would solidify and inform my findings. [See Appendix D for focus group script]. Because my primary interests were to discover the pre-service teachers' evaluations of the portfolio

and to determine if the portfolio is an instrument that supports pre-service teachers' growth, I did not feel a focus group for faculty input would contribute to the study.

Theoretical Lens

I read my findings through American philosopher of education John Dewey's concept of education as growth. John Dewey (1944) views education as a step-by-step process. He states, "The educative process is a continuous process of growth, having as its aim at every stage an added capacity of growth (Dewey, 1944, p. 54). He also maintains that a condition for growth is immaturity and that every immature being has the "capacity – an ability, a power" (p. 41) and the "potentiality – potency, force" (p. 41) to grow. Further, Dewey (1944) states that a being's adaptability for growth "constitutes his *plasticity*" (p. 44), which he describes as "essentially the ability to learn from experience; the power to retain from one experience something which is of avail in coping with the difficulties of a later situation. This coping means power to modify actions on the basis of the results of prior experiences, the power to *develop dispositions*" (p. 44). Is the mandated portfolio an instrument that helps the pre-service teachers truly learn from experience – an instrument that fosters their power to develop dispositions that support their growth?

Dewey (1944) also points out that education is not development. He maintains that the "standard" for development is perfection, and perfection is far beyond what is immediately attainable. Dewey (1944) states, "Development is conceived not as continuous growing, but as the unfolding of latent powers toward a definite goal. The

goal is conceived of as completion, perfection” (p. 56). Since one would think the teacher education programs’ goals would be to foster their pre-service teachers’ growth throughout their education, if one defines education as growth, one projects a lifetime of growing, a progressive realization of present possibilities better fitting one to later requirements. Programs focusing on development rather than growth would undermine their own goal, since development, according to Dewey, anticipates completion. Does the state mandated teacher education portfolio support pre-service teachers’ growth? Dewey (1944) states, “It is not of course a question whether education should prepare for the future. If education is growth, it must progressively realize present possibilities, and thus make individuals better fitted to cope with later requirements” (p. 56).

Significance of the Study

Oklahoma mandates the pre-service teacher portfolio on a wide-scale basis so authorities can evaluate pre-service teachers and university teacher education programs. Since the instructors and pre-service teachers are involved firsthand in this high-stakes, mandated portfolio process, what are their underlying attitudes/evaluations¹⁰ of the portfolio? How do these attitudes/evaluations affect professors’ and pre-service teachers’ thinking, acting, and even directing their actions relative to the portfolio, and what is the meaning and value of the portfolio process to pre-service teachers’ growth? Pre-service teacher attitudes/evaluations are important, since “buy-in” to the entire portfolio process is a necessary step to completing the portfolio. Additionally, professor

¹⁰ I am using Perloff’s (1993) definition of “attitude” (explained fully in Chapter 3) as an analytical tool for my study: therefore, I will use this construction – “attitude/evaluation” – throughout this paper to remind readers that I am examining attitudes as evaluations of the portfolio.

attitudes/evaluations are important, since professors oversee the portfolios, conduct the benchmark interviews, and weave the portfolio assignments into their courses.

Ultimately, I will use this attitudinal study to show the relation between the portfolio process and pre-service teachers' growth.

At my university, the portfolio mandate has become a cumbersome process on which professors and pre-service teachers focus a great deal of time and energy.

Although much research about portfolio development, purpose, and theory has been conducted, few researchers actually examine the attitudes/evaluations of those who are mandated to put this instrument into practice – the professors – and those who actually compile the portfolios – the pre-service teachers. What do their attitudes/evaluations mean? What is the value of these attitudes/evaluations and to whom? My research will fill this gap in the existing literature.

Additionally, attitudinal research is a significant form of research supported by attitudinal studies. As related to schooling, Robinson (2001) maintains that students' feedback is important: "Because attitudes, beliefs, and values influence motivation and learning and, thus, effect student performance, it is imperative to obtain feedback from the major stakeholders in the educational environment – the students [pre-service teachers] – on the techniques that motivate them to perform" (p. 1). It seems reasonable, then, that because the instructors play a huge role in implementing the mandated portfolio, their attitudes/evaluations of the portfolio would be pertinent to the overall understanding of the portfolio's usefulness as an evaluation instrument and its impact on pre-service teachers' growth. Further, the pre-service teachers' attitudes or evaluations toward completing a mandated portfolio play a significant role in the way they compile

their portfolios and ultimately how they view their teacher education process, whether they stay in the program and whether they become teachers at all, even through the alternative certification program. My research adds an interesting twist to existing portfolio studies because I am examining the attitudes/evaluations of both those evaluating and those completing an evaluative instrument, the portfolio.

Another significant discovery centers around the Oklahoma mandate for the portfolio. Did Oklahoma mandators create any philosophical foundation upon which to build the standards-driven portfolio in the first place? Did they pilot the portfolio's use before mandating it? It seems that Oklahoma mandators jumped on the portfolio "bandwagon," mandating it neither grounding it philosophically nor thinking through the consequences of its wide-scale use. The Oklahoma university instructors and pre-service teachers apparently invest great amounts of time and energy into an instrument that may simply be a passing trend, another "reform" so manipulated and distorted to hold little reformational and, more importantly, transformational value.

Finally, my research reflects a method of attitude analysis I created to analyze my data. Reviewing the literature, I found attitude analysis tools for use in the corporate world to evaluate employees (i.e., Pyron, 2001), in the psychology field for measuring psychological attitudes (i.e., Johnson 2001), and in the marketing industry to poll consumers (i.e., Hini, et al., 1995) but could find no specific attitude analysis tools in the educational field at this time. Since my attitude analysis tool explores the participants' words for attitudinal language in order to discover the instructors' and pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio that affect their thoughts and actions relative to the portfolio and beyond, it becomes a form of discourse analysis. This "new"

tool I have constructed for analyzing attitudes adds an original and in-depth dimension to understanding the study participants' views, promising interesting analysis and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER II

Review of The Literature

“...if you went through classes and you passed the classes, shouldn’t that be the statement of your competency to be a teacher?” (Appendix H)

An investigation of the related literature concerning teacher education portfolios situates my study among contemporary studies in the field of portfolio development in education, particularly within conversations about the meaning and value of the portfolio as an evaluation instrument and about the portfolio as an instrument that enhances pre-service teachers’ growth. Before examining these conversations, one must distinguish between the terms “evaluation” and “assessment.” Although many authors use the terms “evaluation” and “assessment” interchangeably, they are distinctly different. Nitko (2004) defines assessment as “the process for obtaining information that is used for making decisions about students, curricula and programs, and educational policy” (p. 513). On the other hand, he defines evaluation as “the process of making value judgments about the worth of a student’s product or performance” (p. 516). Ward and Murray-Ward (1999) clarify the terms even further: “The term ‘evaluation’ includes assessment but also refers to making judgments. In education, judgments may be made

about the performance of a student, teacher, school, district, and so on. And judgments may be made about the quality or worth of an educational program or procedure” (p. 70).

As an additional clarification, although many use the terms “teacher education,” “teacher preparation,” and “teacher training” interchangeably, I will use the term “teacher education” for referring to Oklahoma’s programs. This reference supports John Dewey’s (1944) contention that education is completed with thoughts, actions and emotions. Training, on the other hand is more of a habit and, as Dewey (1944) states, has no “corresponding thought or emotion” (p. 13). The term “preparation” fails to emphasize the importance of the present, and Dewey (1944) likens “educational preparation” to being placed “on a waiting list” (p. 54) for further learning. I will first examine existing definitions and models of portfolios to establish a basis for understanding the portfolio as an evaluative instrument in the general educational setting as well as in the more specific setting of Oklahoma’s pre-service teacher education programs. I will then look at cited advantages and disadvantages of portfolio use ultimately to determine if the mandated teacher education portfolio serves as an instrument that supports pre-service teachers’ growth.

Definitions and Uses of the Education Portfolio

Because the portfolio has been used in the education setting in a number of ways, it is interesting to examine various definitions of the portfolio as it is used in a typical educational setting. Turner (2002), for example, defines the portfolio as a performance-based evaluation instrument which “involves the integration of several processes, skills,

and concepts to yield a demonstration of what the student knows and/or is able to do” (p. 2). Although this definition is brief, its implications are far from simplistic. McMillin (2001) uses more specific language describing the education portfolio as a “purposeful, systematic process of collecting and evaluating student products to document progress toward the attainment of learning targets or show evidence that a learning target has been achieved” (p.234). With even more specific language, Wyatt and Looper (1999) define the education portfolio as “a very personal collection of artifacts and reflections about one’s accomplishments, learning, strengths, and best works. The collection is dynamic, ever-growing and ever-changing” (p. 2).

These general definitions lead into the detailed and precise portfolio definition for teacher education that NCATE (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education) (2002) puts forth:

An accumulation of evidence about individual proficiencies, especially in relation to explicit standards and rubrics, used in evaluation of competency as a teacher or in another professional school role. Contents might include end-of-course evaluations and tasks used for instructional or clinical experience purposes such as projects, journals, and observations by faculty, videos, comments by cooperating teachers or internship supervisors, and samples of student work (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, p. 55).

In a presentation at the Portfolios in Teaching and Teacher Education Conference, Shulman (1994) also provides a detailed definition of the teacher education portfolio, adding that the work of portfolio implementation is “fully realized only through reflective writing, deliberation, and serious conversation.”

Although these definitions vary in detail, all of them share one especially noteworthy feature: the portfolio product must reflect a carefully selected set of targets or accomplishments that guide artifact collection. The NCATE (2002) and Shulman (1994) definitions maintain that student reflection and conversation are also important for implementing the portfolio as an evaluation tool. McLaughlin and Vogt (1998) reiterate the NCATE and Shulman meaning that an effective portfolio should “include goal-setting on the part of both teacher and student, gathering authentic evidences, reflecting, and conferencing” (p. 13). Examining these definitions adds insight into the uses of the portfolio. Additionally, looking at the different portfolio models assists in determining the portfolio’s actual purpose and if that purpose is or connects to fostering pre-service teachers’ growth.

Portfolio Models

In addition to definitions, although researchers are quick to point out that “portfolio assessment¹¹ will be unique to a particular setting,” educators typically recognize three types of education portfolios, (McMillin, 2001, p. 235). The three portfolio models include the showcase portfolio, the documentation portfolio, and the evaluation portfolio (McMillin, 2001; Ward & Murray-Ward 1999). To better understand the potential uses of the portfolio and how these models connect and/or reflect the definitions that accompany these models, the three portfolio models bear closer scrutiny. First, Taylor and Nolen (2005) state that showcase portfolios “tell a story of what

¹¹ Many authors use the terms ‘assessment’ and ‘evaluation’ interchangeably. Since this author is referring to making value judgments about students using terms already defined, the term evaluation would be more appropriate.

students have accomplished, in relation to a set of learning objectives, during a given period of time” (p. 311). A showcase portfolio would include collections of students’ best works from a particular grading period or school year, showcasing the results of their growth over time. Second, the documentation portfolio (which Taylor and Nolen [2005] label a “process portfolio”) details the students’ growth through an authentic performance and is a “vehicle for communication” (p. 320) between the teacher and student. For example, a student writing an essay would show all the steps taken to achieve the final product, with the teacher providing feedback at each stage of preparation. Third, Popham (2002) describes the evaluation portfolio as a tool with a standardized set of requirements, possibly teacher-selected entries, to evaluate students’ work. By examining the evaluation portfolio, the evaluator determines whether students have met “previously determined quality levels of performance” (p. 206).

My university’s portfolio combines all three models (as described in our *Teacher Education Handbook*). Note the bold-faced words:

Teacher candidates [NCATE language] have the opportunity to illustrate progress throughout the professional education program and the integration of learning in all courses. Candidates should consider this portfolio as an evolving display of professional growth during Benchmarks 1-3. The final portfolio, Benchmark 4, illustrates a teacher candidate’s best work.

The portfolio is also required for institutional accreditation by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP) as a continuous assessment tool of programs, standards, outcomes and quality experiences that [my university] provides for our candidates.

Because their portfolios do not follow exactly one of these three common portfolio models, the pre-service teachers at my university might find themselves questioning the purpose of our university's portfolio since my university's education portfolio seems to be a combination of the three models, with greater emphasis on the evaluation model. Is this combination of models effective? Popham (2002) answers the question of whether a portfolio can perform all three functions at once: "My answer is a somewhat shaky *yes*. But if you were to ask me whether one portfolio can perform all three functions *well*, you'd get a rock-solid *no*. The three functions, though related – somewhat like second cousins – are fundamentally different" (p. 206). A simple examination of Oklahoma's portfolio against the three common models and Popham's assessment of mixed models reveals that the Oklahoma portfolio may indeed have been on rocky ground since its inception.

The Educational Portfolio as an Evaluation Instrument

Since my university's greatest emphasis is on the evaluation model, it is productive to examine this model further in order better to understand the portfolio as an evaluation tool. Porter and Cleland (1995, p. 23) help define the portfolio as an evaluation tool by contrasting the portfolio – a nontraditional assessment – to such traditional forms of assessment as objective tests and quizzes. They supply the following comparison:

TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENTS	NONTRADITIONAL ASSESSMENTS
Focus on skill performance	Focus on process
Students acquire objective knowledge	Students thoughtfully judge their own work
Achievement matters	Development matters
Teacher's responsibility	Shared responsibility
First and only draft work valued	Multiple drafts valued
Used to determine a grade	Used by student and teacher to guide learning

By examining the above criteria, it appears that the teacher education portfolio qualifies as a nontraditional evaluation form. However, as will be evident in later chapters, instructors and pre-service teachers at my university do not necessarily contend that our portfolio fits into the previously listed guidelines of a nontraditional assessment, especially the “shared responsibility” and “used by student and teacher to guide learning” guidelines.

Because the portfolio in general educational settings is being used “to secure a broader sample of students’ work than would be possible from a single production task” (Ward & Murray-Ward, 1999, p. 191), it has gained popularity in schools as an alternative or nontraditional form of evaluation. McMillin (2001) cites the following as common characteristics of the portfolio as an evaluative document:

- Clearly defined purpose and learning targets
- Systematic and organized collection of student products
- Pre-established guidelines for what will be included

- Student selection of some of what is included
- Progress documented with specific products and/or evaluations
- Clear and appropriate criteria for evaluating student products
- Portfolio conferences between students and teachers (p. 234)

Other researchers list similar characteristics to those above, with many emphasizing communication as the most important characteristic of the evaluative portfolio. For example, Taylor and Nolen (2005) stress that communication between student and teacher in the form of either written or oral communication is a vital element when using the portfolio as an evaluation instrument. Freidus (1998) adds that connections among students in a peer mentoring relationship can also help with portfolio evaluation and states that in this type of setting, “students. . . support and extend each other’s constructions of knowledge” (p. 66). Considering the multiple uses of today’s evaluative portfolio, it is interesting to examine the portfolio’s emergence in teacher education.

Origins of the Portfolio in the Educational Realm

The portfolio in education did not become popular until the 1970’s and 1980’s with the renewed emphasis in the teaching of writing (Ward & Murray-Ward, 1999). Since writing teachers had long been inundated with papers to grade, they embraced the portfolio system in hopes that it would lighten their grading load (Wyatt and Looper, 1999). Wyatt and Looper (1999) state, “Users of the writing portfolio system of grading touted it as a reliever of the burden of teachers having to read and mark carefully every

paper their students wrote” (p. 4). Widely used in the 1980’s, the portfolio also helped the reading/writing instructor integrate the process approach to writing, taking the writer through five stages of writing development: (1) Pre-writing (the collection and gathering of materials for the chosen topic); (2) Drafting (the rough-draft document that is written after the initial collection of data); (3) Revising (the stage in which the writer examines the draft and makes necessary changes); (4) Editing (the stage after the content changes that focuses more on editorial corrections); and (5) Sharing/Publishing (the time when the writer shares his piece with others) (Wyatt and Looper, 1999).

Opposite of university instructors’ and pre-service teachers’ complaints of the pre-service teacher portfolio, many English/language arts teachers claim that portfolios in the English classrooms have positively impacted student learning in a variety of ways. For example, elementary teacher S.E. Swain (2001) states that portfolios help teachers create “writing communities” (p. 16). She also suggests that writing portfolios empower her first-grade students through the selection, reflection, and meta-reflection (reflecting upon reflections) processes. She states, “Portfolios represent the ultimate learning process: to know, to know that you know, and to know how you know” (p. 20). Ruhana (2001), an eighth grade language arts teacher, concurs and looks forward to the annual portfolio assessment time at her school. She states, “. . .they [the students] see their own growth as writers, as students, as people, and they realize that education is a journey” (p. 47). Tierney, Carter, and Desai (1991) fully explain what portfolio use in the reading-writing classroom can accomplish:

Portfolios offer. . .a framework that responds to demands for student empowerment. . .It is a framework with the potential to empower both teachers

and students to reflect upon their reading and writing and to grow in their understanding of their reading and writing, as well as themselves (p. 42).

Claims concerning the value of writing portfolios extend beyond the English/language arts classroom. For instance, Jane Juska (2001) writes about the power of writing portfolios in the prison system. Juska teaches a language arts course entitled, “Reading, Writing and Telling Stories” at the San Quentin prison. Through her experiences with the portfolio, she has seen the prisoners grow in encouraging ways, stating, “. . .the men gain confidence and fluency. This, in an environment where language is monosyllabic and obscene, is nothing short of miraculous” (p. 84). Juska’s claims about the writing portfolio in this marginal environment certainly support Tierney, Carter and Desai’s (1991) contention that the writing portfolio is part of the conditions of empowerment associated with the portfolio (even in a prison where the environment is one that most would perceive as being unfavorable to growth).

Even though the purpose is somewhat different from the English/language arts portfolio, one has to wonder why the creators of Oklahoma’s pre-service teacher portfolio did not carefully examine such successful language arts portfolio experiences and draw upon their positive components. For example, why did the mandators not stress the “journey” involved in portfolio building rather than merely emphasizing outcomes? Additionally, why is there little emphasis on the collaborative or “community-building” facet – an obvious strength of the language arts portfolio? I ask Oklahoma portfolio creators to consider what a pre-service teacher portfolio would look like if it were based on the positive features of the successful language arts portfolio.

Since implementation of the English/language arts writing portfolios, portfolios have increased in popularity in a variety of other content areas within education, both in common schools and in higher education. Wyatt and Looper (1999) explain that many universities now require all students to complete a general education portfolio – with such contents as resumes, educational and career goals, and work samples – as an exit requirement within higher education. Educators within teacher education programs have also seized upon this now popular means of collecting students’ work. Wyatt and Looper (1999) point out that in many states (including Oklahoma), “...students seeking certification in teaching at all levels and in all disciplines are being required to present a portfolio for completion of degrees in education leading to certification” (p. 7). Because each state implements the pre-service teacher portfolio with its own set of guidelines, the portfolio varies widely from state to state and even from university to university within a given state. Most of these portfolio designs do have commonalities, but a standard, nation-wide format has yet to be established. What does seem evident is that teacher education portfolio creators neither clearly identified one of the three models to guide the teacher education portfolio they would mandate nor did they examine portfolios with successful histories for fostering growth and self empowerment.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Teacher Education Portfolio

While the fact that Oklahoma teacher education portfolio creators have apparently not conceptualized the portfolio by first creating a philosophical foundation and scaffolding from which they would build the mandated portfolio already puts it at a

disadvantage and foretells shaky outcomes, researchers have identified and named both advantages and disadvantages of the teacher education portfolio in general. In fact, contrary to my perception after my research on the history of the Oklahoma teacher education portfolio and after listening to professors and pre-service teachers at my university, portfolio researchers and theorists are overwhelmingly positive about the advantages of the teacher education portfolio.

Advantages of Portfolios

On closer inspection these same researchers and theorists appear biased in their evaluations of the teacher education portfolio, for many of them praise portfolio implementation (Porter & Cleland, 1995; Wyatt & Looper, 1999; Tierney et al., 1991; Lyons, 1998a; Lyons, 1998b; Lyons 1998c) and even tout the portfolio as an ultimate form of assessment (McLaughlin, 1998; Adams, 1995; Krause, 1996; Campbell and Brummett, 2002), while at the same time typically listing more disadvantages than advantages when discussing portfolio use. When considering the mandated teacher education portfolio, even the cited advantages can become problematic. For example, one advantage cited is the individualization that might take place with portfolio use. Ward & Murray-Ward (1999) state that the portfolio is more meaningful than other forms of evaluation because it “permits more involvement by students in the assessment process by allowing them to select pieces when appropriate, evaluate their own work, and reflect on learning over time” (p. 192). Other researchers agree. For example, McMillin (2001) contends that when using portfolios, “students become actively involved in self-

evaluation and self-reflection” (p. 236). Wyatt and Looper (1999) liken the portfolio to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) since each student is evaluated based on his or her specific needs, and Shulman (1998) maintains that portfolios can provide a connection that makes it possible to document the development of teaching and learning over time. Does completing a mandated portfolio help pre-service teachers individually to select and evaluate their own work in a distinctive fashion? Further, because of its standards, can evaluators evaluate a mandated portfolio based on pre-service teachers’ personal needs?

Another advantage researchers cite is that portfolio development supports collaborative evaluation (McMillin, 2001; Porter & Cleland, 1995; Tierney et al. 1991). McMillin (2001) states, “In addition to self-reflections, students learn from peer reviews and teacher feedback. They may evaluate the work of others and interact with teachers to come to a better understanding of the quality of their performance” (p. 236). Freidus (1998) adds that faculty-student and student-student connections in portfolio development help form a setting which promotes “personal and professional growth within the context of community” (p. 66). Portfolios also help both teachers and students examine the process of learning, so the products are more than just summative evaluations of achievement (Ward and Murray-Ward, 1999; McMillin 2001). McMillin (2001) points out that because portfolio assessment is continuous, it is “integrally related to learning” (p. 236), while others claim that the portfolio helps both the teachers and the students to examine student development and the teaching/learning process (Ward and Murray-Ward, 1999). Like the “advantage” of individualization, collaboration as a stated “advantage” appears problematic when discussing a mandated portfolio. Can

collaboration occur when implementing a wide-scale mandated portfolio? Do all institutions have enough personnel to maintain the level of collaboration needed for effective instructor, pre-service teacher discussions? Who pays for the level of collaboration the experts highlight as a primary advantage of teacher education portfolios?

Researchers cite student motivation as another advantage of portfolio use (McMillin, 2001; Ward and Murray-Ward, 1999). McMillin (2001) reports that many students feel empowered when using a portfolio as they see the “link between their efforts and accomplishments” (p. 236). Further, as part of their portfolios, students reflect upon their artifacts, which, according to some researchers, can motivate the students because reflection provides them the opportunity for self-evaluation. Wyatt and Looper (1999) state that reflection is “self-evaluation articulated in writing” (p. 11) and that this reflection gives the students authority and ownership of their work. Do pre-service teachers have ownership when meeting mandated standards, requirements, and reflections? Is reflection really reflection if mandated? Can a mandated portfolio truly empower and motivate pre-service teachers?

Disadvantages of Portfolios

Researchers commonly cite three disadvantages of portfolio implementation that affect both the instructors using the portfolio for evaluation and the students completing the requirements for the portfolio: the time involved in portfolio implementation, the power shift inherent in portfolio usage, and the difficulty of evaluating portfolios. First,

one obvious disadvantage is that the portfolio is a vast undertaking for both instructors and students. Shulman (1998) calls this “heavy lifting” (p. 35) and adds that portfolio preparation takes a lot of time and is oftentimes “hard to do” (p. 35). This statement directly contradicts a previously cited reason for first using portfolios in the writing classroom – to lighten the instructors’ loads. Because the portfolio process is vast, time, as related to instructor responsibility, becomes an issue. McMillin (2001) states, “Many hours are needed to design the portfolios and scoring criteria, and many more hours will be spent reviewing, scoring and conferencing with students. . .” (p. 238). Airasian (2000) adds that portfolios require extra time for instructors in the aspects of managing, organizing and record keeping. Moreover, portfolios are time-consuming for the students preparing them. Shulman (1998) points out that portfolios that address standards require a considerable time demand, and research has yet to determine the personal and professional costs of the time required. Lyons (1998c) adds that many students preparing portfolios may trivialize them or see them merely as “elaborate scrapbooks” (p. 19). Valencia and Calfee (1991) summarize, “Portfolio assessment is demanding; it requires expertise, time, and commitment” (p. 339).

The second cited disadvantage that is also often problematic for both groups – the students and the professors – is the power shift which arises when using the portfolio as an evaluation tool. The power shift concern is two-pronged – one prong being the power shift that occurs between the instructor and the student when compiling the portfolio; and the other prong being the power shift that occurs between the instructor and student when evaluating the final product. Concerning the power shift between teachers and students when compiling the portfolio, Parsons (1998) states, “For the portfolio to ‘work,’ the

learner must gain power; the teacher must purposely lose it. This shift creates discomfort for some teachers and learners” (p. 2). Lyons (1998c) adds that, while many of those involved with the portfolio speak of the “transformative power of it, the validation, the clarification of one’s ideas, philosophy, and strategies for teaching that came out of their portfolios conversations,” (p. 19) at the same time the process may be difficult, for students often feel “overwhelmed. . . by the sense of self revealed” (p. 19).

The second prong of the power shift concern arises in the portfolio’s evaluation. Note that this prong overlaps with the third listed disadvantage of portfolio use – the evaluation of the portfolio. Because evaluation involves subjectivity, Parsons (1998) stresses the difficulty differentiating “good work” from “poor work” in a portfolio environment. Additionally, who decides the composition of these performance standards, and how does the concept of standardization fit with the notion of education as growth? Similarly, how do teachers find a balance between guiding pre-service teachers through the portfolio process while still granting personal freedom and creativity? This predicament often sends conflicting messages – “This is your personal portfolio to create any way you like – so long as you give me what I want!” (Parsons, 1998, p. 2).

A third disadvantage (that overlaps with the previously listed power shift disadvantage) also exists – scoring an evaluation portfolio in a high stakes testing situation. Ward and Murray-Ward (1999) point out that this model of portfolio (the evaluation model) typically has carefully specified outcomes so that the results of assessment will be reliable and that in a high stakes situation, oftentimes students and teachers “engage in practices that invalidate the scores,” (p. 192) with instructors helping students in inappropriate ways in order to garner the needed results. The authors state,

“This practice raises questions about whether the work was really the students’ efforts and about the validity of portfolios as measures of students’ achievement” (p. 192). This problematic situation speaks to individualization and a kind of collaboration as cited in the “advantages” to portfolio implementation. Shulman (1998) takes this subjectivity in scoring dilemma one step further. To score the teacher education portfolio, most professors set up an objective scoring system to compare students’ work fairly. Does this system not end up “objectifying what’s in the portfolio to the point where the portfolio will be nothing but a very, very cumbersome multiple choice test?” (Shulman, p. 35). Once again, the problems cited with scoring portfolios contradict a previously mentioned “advantage” of portfolio development – individualization. If an absolute standard exists, how can the portfolio measure individual student growth?

At my university, the instructors’ and pre-service teachers’ attitudes/evaluations¹² toward our portfolio seem mostly to contradict the overriding positive research. Recall that what sometimes appears to be research reporting positive results becomes less positive when examined closely. Pre-service teachers completing my university’s mandated portfolio appear to sense what researchers cite as advantages and what they cite as disadvantages to be problematic. First, pre-service teachers here do not seem to enjoy the individual input so often cited as an advantage of portfolio use. In fact, our pre-service teachers typically respond to the mandated standards in a rather “robotic” fashion that is far from individual. Does the existence of standards, benchmarks and other “gate-keeping” mechanisms limit the student choices and, in turn, create “cookie-cutter” portfolios? Besides, how much authority can the pre-service teachers have when

¹² As a reminder, because I am using Perloff’s (1993) definition of “attitude” (which will be explained fully in Chapter 3) as an analytical tool for my study, I will use the construction – “attitude/evaluation” – throughout the paper to remind readers that I am examining attitudes as evaluations of the portfolio.

completing a competency-based portfolio? Second, our portfolio appears not to support the collaborative evaluation many researchers cite as an advantage – the sheer number of pre-service teachers at various preparation levels versus the few full-time instructors at my university prevents many professional and personal connections from occurring. Instead, connections seem to be professors explaining what needs to be done, included, and organized so the pre-service teachers can meet the standards. Moreover, what can student-teacher and student-student discussions yield – except for clarification of the guidance already provided in the standards? Third, my university’s pre-service teachers do not contend the portfolio to be a motivating instrument and typically complain about their lack of power when dealing with the mandated portfolio. In truth, the portfolio seems to threaten our pre-service teachers, not contribute to conditions of self-empowerment.

Since Oklahoma mandates the portfolio as a wide-scale evaluation instrument, what is being measured? Are instructors evaluating individual pre-service teacher growth or evaluating pre-service teachers by comparing their work to standards or to other pre-service teachers? Does fulfilling the portfolio requirements truly reflect the content pre-service teachers learn in their required courses? Does completing the portfolio provide pre-service teachers (as relayed in the state’s purpose for mandating the pre-service teacher portfolio) with the “opportunity. . . to critically evaluate [sic] what teachers need to know to be successful and to consider different types of learners and school environments” (Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, Portfolio Assessment)? Most importantly, does completing the portfolio support the pre-service teachers in their growth? Answering these questions may help determine the portfolio’s usefulness as an

instrument for measuring growth and as a process that supports pre-service teachers' growth while in a program: their progressively realizing present possibilities thereby fitting them "to cope with later requirements" (Dewey 56).

Additional research reveals justification for vigilance in portfolio implementation. For example, in "Portfolio Assessment: Let us Proceed with Caution," Parsons states, "Realistically, the freedom of choice that portfolio assessment encourages may not work in all educational environments" (1998, p. 3). Reis and Villaume also warn that "little research exists that examines the benefits and tensions that emerge when portfolios are adapted for wide-scale assessment" (2002, p. 10). Is completing the Oklahoma education portfolio beneficial to the pre-service teachers, or does it cause too much tension? Mokhtari, et al, (1996) caution, "...it is not yet clear how or whether such an authentic, continuous, and collaborative process can be used to evaluate all students on a wide-scale basis" (p. 6).

Portfolio Theory vs. Portfolio Practice

Although researchers and theorists cite advantages and disadvantages to portfolio development (typically citing more disadvantages than advantages), overall, experts praise the portfolios' use as an evaluation instrument. This positive outlook sharply contrasts my own analysis of the research and also contradicts the statements made by pre-service teachers and professors at my school who make no effort to hide their hatred of the portfolio and, in their minds, its worthlessness. A lack of evidence supporting the preparers' attitudes/evaluations toward the mandated portfolio makes obvious the gap in

the literature concerning portfolios – in theory, portfolios are highly acclaimed evaluative instruments; in practice, portfolios appear to be despised and viewed by instructors and pre-service teachers as poor evaluative instruments.

Although research supports attitudinal studies as a significant form of research, I discovered little existing research concerning attitudes/evaluations of portfolios. Recall that Robinson (2001) contends that students' feedback is very important. It seems reasonable, then, that the students' [pre-service teachers'] attitudes/evaluations toward the writing of the mandated portfolio play a significant role in the way they compile their portfolios and ultimately in their teacher education process. Additionally, because the instructors play a huge role in implementing the mandated portfolio, their attitudes/evaluations toward the instrument seem pertinent to the overall understanding of the portfolio as an evaluation instrument. Moreover, instructors' attitudes are important because their attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio affect the pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations.

Instructor and pre-service teacher attitudes/evaluations toward the mandated portfolio need further examination. Just what are the attitudes/evaluations of the Oklahoma pre-service teachers who are at the performance end of the mandate, and how do these attitudes/evaluations influence the pre-service teachers' thinking and acting towards the portfolio? Does the portfolio serve as a means for growth, and does it hold educative meaning and value for the pre-service teachers? By focusing on these questions, I hope to enter the conversation concerning portfolios and perhaps interrupt researchers' and developers' thinking that the mandated portfolio, as it is used for

evaluating Oklahoma pre-service teachers, is the panacea for determining pre-service teacher and program competence.

CHAPTER III

Methodology and Procedures

“If you want to be that organized and put everything down on paper and evaluate somebody by their paperwork, then it’s really organized – down to the last tab” (Appendix G).

Introduction

Max van Manen describes phenomenology as “the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience” (1987, p. 10). In choosing to do human science research, I seek to develop a deeper understanding of an everyday experience. The everyday experience for this study is the mandated portfolio towards which the instructors and pre-service teachers at my university express strong attitudes/evaluations. At my university, most pre-service teachers begin developing portfolios during their sophomore year when taking the course EDUC 2103, Education Seminar. They then add to and build the portfolio in each subsequent education course ultimately completing their portfolios during their student teaching semesters. Therefore, the portfolio is integrally connected to the pre-service teachers’ everyday college experience from their sophomore year through graduation.

Since one goal of my research is to discover why the apparent contradiction exists between researchers’ attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio and my university’s

instructors' and pre-service teachers attitudes/ evaluations toward the portfolio, I chose to interpret my data through the lens of the interpretive/constructivist paradigm; Mertens (1998) emphasizes the need for the researcher in the interpretive/constructivist framework to understand the complex world of lived experiences from those who are actually living it. In staying true to this model, I see pre-service teachers' reality reflected in their attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio. At the heart of this study, their concerns and comments became evaluations of the portfolio's meaning and value. I frame my data collection in a mixture of qualitative research methods to acquire a true sense of the lived experiences through the attitudes/evaluations of those involved firsthand in Oklahoma's pre-service teacher portfolios – the professors that implement them and the pre-service teachers themselves. I examine pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio because I hope to discover through this examination if they perceive themselves to grow educationally through compiling artifacts, writing reflections, and completing the final portfolio product.

Methodology: Attitude Analysis as a Methodological Tool

Definitions: Attitude and Attitude Analysis as an Analytical Tool

I doubt that many think of attitude as evaluation and tend simply to polarize attitudes into positive and negative. As an example, Ryan and Cooper (2004) define attitude as a “predisposition to act in a positive or negative way toward people, ideas, and events” (p. 151). Most definitions of attitude are similar to Ryan and Cooper's, tending to describe attitudes as either positive or negative. To interrupt this common way of

thinking, I will use Richard M. Perloff's (1993) definition of "attitude": "a learned, enduring, global evaluation of an object (person, entity, or idea) that exerts a directive impact on social behavior" (p. 49). Perloff expands his basic definition to include three major emphases: 1). attitude is a learned appraisal of a situation; 2). attitude is most often a lasting impression; and 3). attitudes have a direct influence on how people think and act. Using his definition as an analytical tool, I will analyze the participants' comments seeking ultimately to uncover their evaluations of the teacher education portfolio and to determine how these evaluations towards the portfolio affect how they think and act relative to it. In short, does the portfolio at my university serve as a means for pre-service teachers' growth?

Using Richard M. Perloff's (1993) definition, I performed what I call "attitude analysis" – exploring the participants' words for attitudinal language, language that revealed evaluations of the portfolio's many facets. Specifically, using attitude analysis, I explored the participants' words for attitudinal language, in order to discover the instructors' and pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio that affect their thoughts and actions relative to the portfolio and beyond. To do so I conducted the first step of my research using a descriptive research technique, a technique that Gay and Airasian (2000) stress is especially useful for assessing attitudes, the PAQ – an open-ended questionnaire. I analyzed the participants' comments seeking ultimately to uncover their attitudes/evaluations of the teacher education portfolio and to determine how these attitudes/evaluations towards the portfolio affect how they think and act relative to the instrument. I conducted this attitude analysis for both of my qualitative instruments, the PAQ and the focus group, and will explore the results in Chapters 4 and 5.

Part I – Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire: Participants, Data

Collection and Data Analysis

Participant – Researcher/Instructor

As a white, middle-class, female professor in a small Midwestern university, I am a participant in this study since I am involved firsthand with the portfolio process at my university, instructing many of the pre-service teachers preparing the portfolio and also implementing the requirements for the portfolio in the undergraduate classes that I teach – Education 3032, Measurement and Evaluation; Education 3913, Principles and Methods of Teaching; and Education 3422, Teaching Reading in the Content Area. I also serve on committees that review the portfolios for the pre-service teachers' interviews held at Benchmarks 2 and 4, and I have consulted with individual pre-service teachers on numerous occasions regarding their portfolio preparation. Therefore, my involvement with the pre-service teachers and their portfolios has become a large portion of my focus; I am definitely a part of the portfolio preparation process at my university. Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that researcher/participant involvement is important: "The inquirer and the 'object' of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and known are inseparable" (p. 94). In fact, during my research this closeness seemed to create a *need* to share information, as many of the respondents answered the PAQ questions at length, with one professor stapling ten additional pages of typed responses. Rubin and Rubin (1995) explain one reason for this occurrence, "Who you are counts. Your interest,

curiosity, and concern encourage the conversational partner to discuss the topic at length” (p. 41).

Participants - Instructor PAQ

The instructors participating in the instructor PAQ consisted of eight females and six males and came from the following content areas: two from health and physical education, one from secondary language arts education, one from secondary mathematics education, one from secondary social sciences education, one from secondary speech and theatre education, five from elementary and early childhood education, and three who did not specify area of instruction. Two respondents indicated they were in the age range of 24-34; three indicated the age bracket of 35-44; six said they were in the 45-54 age category; and three indicated the 55 – above age range. All 14 respondents checked ‘Caucasian’ for race.

Participants – Pre-service Teacher PAQ

The pre-service teachers answering the PAQ came from four classes representing a variety of preparation levels: Education 3032 Measurement and Evaluation, a required course for all seniors (elementary and secondary majors) enrolled in their professional semester; Education 3913, Principles and Methods of Teaching, a required course for secondary majors in their junior or senior year; Education 3413, Foundations of Reading a required course for elementary majors in their junior or senior year; and Education

2103, Introduction to Education, an introductory course for elementary and secondary education majors, mostly in their sophomore or junior year. In the end, ninety pre-service teachers responded to the PAQ. Of those, 67 were female, and 23 were male. The pre-service teachers came from a variety of college majors, ranging from early childhood education and elementary education to secondary education and special education. They also ranged in level of preparation – with one freshman, eleven sophomores, 25 juniors, 51 seniors, and two post-graduates. Sixty-eight pre-service teachers indicated they were in the age range of 17-24. Twenty-one pre-service teachers checked the age 25 or older, and one did not respond to the question of age. Eighty-four pre-service teachers identified their race as “Caucasian,” three said “Latino/Hispanic,” two indicated “Native American,” and one said “Other.” For cumulative GPA, one pre-service teacher indicated “Below 2.5”; seventeen pre-service teachers said their averages were between 2.5 and 2.9; twenty three participants indicated 3.0 – 3.4; and 49 said their GPA was between 3.5 and 4.0.¹³

Data Collection – Instructor and Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Because I initially wanted input from as many participants as possible, I began the project with a descriptive method of data collection – the questionnaire. Gay and Airasian (2000) state, “A descriptive study determines and describes the way things are” (p. 275). They further emphasize that descriptive research techniques are useful for investigating issues in education and are especially useful for assessing attitudes (Gay & Airasian

¹³ The grade point requirement for admission to teacher education at my university is a 2.5. However, students can enroll in education classes, contingent on waivers given by the Teacher Education Committee – a policy-enacting committee formed of administrators and professors.

2000). Therefore, I used a questionnaire, entitled the Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ), to “interview” instructors in my university’s education department who implement the portfolio to determine if their attitudes were comparable to the pre-service teachers’ and in any way reflect the views found in the research. For the instructors’ questionnaire I used purposive sampling for my population, as I chose populations who were directly involved (at some level) with the education portfolio. Further, using a similar questionnaire, I sampled pre-service teachers from four classes at my university in order to obtain feedback from those in a variety of content area majors, of different ages, and at various levels of preparation. After discussing the Informed Consent [See Appendix F] and gaining the needed signatures, I distributed the PAQ to the instructors at a faculty meeting and to the pre-service teachers in their four separate classes. I informed the pre-service teachers that completing the PAQ would not influence their grades and that all data would be confidential. With permission from the cooperating professors, I gave the pre-service teacher respondents as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaires and also told them they could attach pages if necessary.

The first page of the questionnaire contained demographic questions, so that I could eventually sort the answers to the questionnaire in a variety of ways if desired. The second page included six open-ended questions to which the respondents could respond at any length. [See Appendix C for complete questionnaires]. The questions on the PAQ were general in nature and were designed to permit the respondents to answer as thoughtfully and completely as possible. Van Manen (1997) asserts that this writing

down of human experiences is a valid means of generating original texts for interpretation:

The ‘data’ of human science research are human experiences. It seems natural, therefore, that if we wish to investigate the nature of a certain experience or phenomenon, the most straightforward way to go about our research is to ask selected individuals to write their experiences down (p. 63).

The chart below includes a parallel list of questions I asked in the instructor and student PAQs. Note that questions two and four are slightly different in order to correspond to the population responding to the questions.

Table 2
Instructor and Student PAQ Questions

Instructor PAQ	Student PAQ
1). Describe your overall attitude toward the pre-service teaching portfolio at (our university).	1). Describe your overall attitude toward the pre-service teaching portfolio at (our university)
2). How has portfolio implementation affected your teaching methodologies?	2). How has the portfolio helped you in your teacher education preparation?
3). What, if anything, has caused frustration for you concerning your portfolio preparation?	3). What, if anything, has caused frustration for you concerning your portfolio preparation?
4). How do you foresee the students using the portfolio after graduation?	4). How do you foresee using the portfolio after graduation?
5). Please list any suggestions you might have regarding the portfolio process at (our university)	5). Please list any suggestions you might have regarding the portfolio process at (our university)

Data Analysis – Instructor and Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Since I neither used a Likert Scale nor a short answer format but questionnaires with open-ended questions, I perceive the questionnaires as miniature structured interviews. Aligning responses by question immediately revealed that the respondents often failed to answer the question they were supposed to address; thus, in order to identify actual attitudes/evaluations, I collated responses and “coded” them by recurring topics as Ely, et al (2001), suggest: “In actual practice, we read and reread a portion of data and provide labels – usually notes in the margins – that identify a meaning unit. This process is called coding” (p. 162). As I coded the data, I used a different colored pencil for each topic, adding colors as new topics surfaced.

Identifying relations among the topics helped me determine seven broad categories in which to sort the data: the cost associated with the portfolio; the time associated with the portfolio; the organization of the portfolio; the reflection associated with the portfolio; the Oklahoma mandate and its application at our university; the wording of the competencies; and the portfolio’s educative meaning and value. Four categories (the time associated with the portfolio, the reflection associated with the portfolio, the wording of the competencies, and the portfolio’s educative meaning and value) appeared in both sets of data – the instructor PAQ and the pre-service teacher PAQ. Although the other three categories (the cost associated with the portfolio, the portfolio organization, and the Oklahoma mandate) appeared only in the pre-service teacher data, they each appeared frequently enough to merit a category.

After reading and rereading the data, in what Ely, et al (2001), refer to as the “recursive analytical process” (p. 175), I identified the attitudinal language and then interpreted that language using Perloff’s (1993) definition and my analytical tool – attitude analysis. I sought to identify the respondents’ attitudes/evaluations towards these topics associated with the portfolio in order to understand at some level their overall attitudes/evaluations and how these attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio and the portfolio process may affect their growth through the portfolio process. Finally, from this analysis, I formed the questions for the focus group interview session. I will report the PAQ and focus group data analyses in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Part II – Focus Group: Participants, Data

Collection and Data Analysis

Participants – Focus Group

After examining the answers to the PAQs, I planned to use the PAQ data to ask more poignant questions to pre-service teachers to learn about portfolio compilation in a “focused” way. Therefore, I formed a focus group to expand upon topics which most frequently occurred in the PAQ, seeking to learn if the research, the PAQ responses, and the focus group responses would triangulate. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the triangulation process as validating each piece of information against at least one other source and/or a second method. They stress, “No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated” (p. 283). I also wanted further to explore

contradictions and “new” concerns about the portfolio which might arise in a conversational setting. Therefore, I determined that the addition of a focus group made up of pre-service teachers who participated in the original PAQ would solidify and clarify my findings while perhaps highlighting previously undocumented concerns.

I formed the focus group in January 2004 by inviting students who had participated in filling out the original questionnaire for this study in the fall of 2003. My recruitment entailed inviting students from ED3913 (Principles and Methods of Teaching) and ED3032 (Measurement and Evaluation) to participate by giving them the time and date of the focus group session. I chose these two classes from which to invite pre-service teachers because they were my classes and were, therefore, easily accessible to me and because the two classes contained a good cross section of participants according to content area majors, ages, and levels of preparation. I informed the pre-service teachers in these two classes that filling out the original questionnaire for my research in the fall of 2003 was a prerequisite for becoming a part of the focus group. I then distributed a participation form to each student, again emphasizing that participation in the focus group would not influence their grades. Of all those who agreed, I randomly chose students by placing their forms in a box, then drawing out nine. [See Appendix D for the focus group participation form]. I notified each participant in person of his or her random selection to the focus group. I also made follow-up phone calls to remind the participants whose names were drawn of the focus group meeting. Because of scheduling conflicts, only five of the nine participants chosen actually participated in the focus group, one male and four females. The male is a health and physical education major, also working on his elementary and special education certifications and expects to

graduate May 2005. One female is a secondary science major expecting to graduate May 2004 (she was student teaching at the time of the focus group). Another female is a health and physical education major expecting to graduate December 2004. And the final two females are both elementary majors expecting to graduate May 2005.

Data Collection – Focus Group

Following are the nine questions/prompts I asked during the focus group interview session and the rationale for asking these questions:

Table 3
Focus Group Questions

QUESTION/PROMPT	RATIONALE
1. First, please go around the room and tell your major and year of expected graduation.	Question 1 – To find out educational details about each participant.
2. Please discuss the issues of time and cost associated with the creation of the portfolio.	Questions 2 through 6 – To verify the broad categories in which I had sorted my PAQ data.
3. Several in the original questionnaire mentioned the organization aspect of the portfolio. Please elaborate.	
4. Many mentioned the “reflection” when answering the original questionnaire. Please speak to the reflections that were a part of your portfolio.	
5. Please discuss why you think the state of Oklahoma and [our university] require the portfolio in the first place.	
6. Please discuss the wording of the competencies themselves.	
7. Will the compilation of the portfolio make you a better teacher?	Questions 7 & 8 – To gauge the pre-service teachers’ attitudes concerning the value of the portfolio and to see if these attitudes aligned with attitudes revealed in the pre-service teacher PAQ.
8. Do you think that a poor portfolio is indicative of a poor teacher?	
9. Is there anything further you would like to add concerning the portfolio preparation process?	Question 9 – To ensure that focus group members would have a chance to address anything left unsaid.

Data Analysis – Focus Group

The group met for a total of sixty-five minutes; I audio-taped the conversation that ensued. To analyze the data, I first listened several times to the tape recording from the focus group session, eventually transcribing the conversation, starting and stopping the tape as needed. Then, reading through the transcription for accuracy, I coded (Ely, 2001, p. 162) the comments according to the seven categories identified earlier, and finally, as Ely (2001, p. 175) suggests, made notes in the margins of the transcription to point out additional categories that emerged. I will report the data analysis in Chapter 5.

Credibility of Data Collection and Interpretation

As instructors and pre-service teachers responded to questions about the portfolio, embedded concepts emerged that helped in the understanding of their attitudes/evaluations. The purpose of my qualitative research through both the PAQ and the focus group was not to discover principles that are true all the time and in all conditions. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) state, the goal of qualitative research is “understanding of specific circumstances, how and why things actually happen in a complex world. Knowledge in qualitative interviewing is situational and conditional” (p. 38). Thus, I looked only at the portfolio at my university at this time.

I administered the PAQ to the instructors and pre-service teachers at my university in the fall of 2003. Out of the eighteen instructors in the education department at my university to whom I gave the questionnaire, fourteen completed and returned it.

All of the pre-service teachers invited to participate agreed to do so. Therefore, with such a high response rate, the non-respondent bias is low. Additionally, the demographics collected helped me carefully examine the respondents involved with the portfolio. Although my data is specific to my own campus, since all universities in Oklahoma with teacher education programs have to implement the portfolio, I believe my data will show some degree of generalizability.

Since qualitative research methods differ greatly from quantitative research methods, making the study credible involves different indicators of trustworthiness. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), in order to make the study credible, “researchers judge the credibility of qualitative work by its transparency, consistency-coherence, and communicability” (p. 85). These factors have guided my study of instructors’ and pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward the portfolio to create credibility in research data collection and interpretation.

Ethical Issues

Rubin and Rubin (1995) state, “Research ethics are about how to acquire and disseminate trustworthy information in ways that cause no harm to those being studied” (p. 93). Keeping this statement in mind, I required participants in both parts of my study to read and sign consent forms that guaranteed the confidentiality of the research activity. [See Appendix E for Informed Consent forms]. I kept the completed questionnaires in a locked file cabinet in my office. I informed all participants that their participation was strictly voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time without penalty, and that the data

would be confidential. For the PAQ I identified the individuals according to the demographic data they supplied; for the focus group, I used pseudonyms for the individual pre-service teachers to guarantee confidentiality.

CHAPTER IV

Data Analysis – Part I, The Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire (paq)

“Students are traumatized by the process. . .” (Appendix I)

I administered the instructor and pre-service teacher PAQs to learn instructors’ and pre-service teachers’ attitudes/evaluations of the portfolio, to have more than “hearsay” to gauge these attitudes/evaluations, to determine the meaning and value of these attitudes/evaluations, and to theorize how these attitudes/evaluations might influence the pre-service teachers’ thoughts and actions. Using Perloff’s (1993) definition as an analytical tool, I examined the participants’ comments within the coded categories seeking ultimately to uncover their attitudes, that is, their “learned, enduring, global evaluations” towards the teacher education portfolio, to determine how these evaluations influence their thinking and acting relative to the portfolio process, and to discover how this thinking and acting relates to their growth. Does the portfolio process at my university truly foster pre-service teachers’ growth?

In this chapter, I analyze instructor and pre-service teacher comments within the seven broad categories into which I sorted the data. For each category, I begin by giving an overview of the scholarly research on portfolios related to that category. I then cite the data and provide a brief, initial interpretation of that data in terms of the participants’ attitudes/evaluations with respect to the particular category. For clarity, I will highlight

participants' words and phrases that address the categories in bold type, and I will underline participants' words and phrases that address attitudes/evaluations. To analyze the PAQ data, I first sorted the questionnaires by group – the instructors being one group, and each class of pre-service teachers making up the four remaining groups.¹⁴ Within each instructor and class group, I then compiled the responses according to the six questions contained in the questionnaires. For convenient reference, I repeat the previously cited chart below before examining each category I identified during my data analysis. Note that questions two and four are slightly different, in order to correspond to the population responding to the questions.

¹⁴ The four classes that I surveyed were Education 3032, Measurement and Evaluation; Education 3913, Principles and Methods of Teaching; Education 3413, Foundations of Reading; and EDUC 2103, Introduction to Education.

Table 4
Instructor and Student PAQ Questions

Instructor PAQ	Pre-service teacher PAQ
1). Describe your overall attitude toward the pre-service teaching portfolio at (our university).	1). Describe your overall attitude toward the pre-service teaching portfolio at (our university)
2). How has portfolio implementation affected your teaching methodologies?	2). How has the portfolio helped you in your teacher education preparation?
3). What, if anything, has caused frustration for you concerning your portfolio preparation?	3). What, if anything, has caused frustration for you concerning your portfolio preparation?
4). How do you foresee the pre-service teachers using the portfolio after graduation?	4). How do you foresee using the portfolio after graduation?
5). Please list any suggestions you might have regarding the portfolio process at (our university)	5). Please list any suggestions you might have regarding the portfolio process at (our university)
6). Is there anything else you'd like to share concerning the portfolio process at (our university)?	6). Is there anything else you'd like to share concerning the portfolio process at (our university)?

Our university has two campuses that lie 70 miles apart, both with full-time education faculty employed. The main campus hosts four full-time education professors, while the satellite campus employs five full-time professors of education.¹⁵ Between the two campuses, approximately 200 pre-service teachers take education courses in any given semester. Without fail, the portfolio arises as a “hot topic” at every education faculty gathering, formal or informal. Thus, since the pre-service teaching portfolio is

¹⁵ Three of the professors at the satellite campus have offices at the main campus and travel between the two sites for their teaching duties. Additionally, please note that fourteen faculty members completed the PAQ, because I included the secondary subject area instructors in the survey. Their primary duties are in their own departments, not the education department.

constantly a topic of conversation among my fellow professors, I decided to examine my fellow professors' attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio by administering and analyzing the faculty Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire (PAQ). As a reminder, I use Richard M. Perloff's (1993) definition of "attitude" as stated in his book *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century*: "An attitude is a learned, enduring, global evaluation of an object (person, entity or idea) that exerts a directive impact on social behavior" (p. 49). Perloff expands his basic definition to include three major emphases: 1). attitude is a learned appraisal of a situation; 2). attitude is most often a lasting impression; and 3). attitudes have a direct influence how people think and act. Since instructors at my university must address the portfolio in their courses, oversee pre-service teachers' progress during the creation of the portfolios, and provide much input into the guidelines for implementing the portfolio, examining their attitudes/evaluations towards the portfolio should yield insight into their thoughts and actions concerning the portfolio as an instrument for pre-service teachers' growth.

Like the faculty, the pre-service teachers at my university constantly discuss the portfolio and its requirements and implications. Although, like the professors, the pre-service teachers are highly involved in the portfolio process, their involvement is of a different nature: before they can earn their teacher certification, the pre-service teachers must develop and compile the portfolio, including the artifacts and accompanying reflections, as set forth in my university's benchmark requirements.¹⁶

¹⁶ See Chapter 1 for discussion of portfolio benchmark requirements at my university.

The Cost Associated with the Portfolio

While searching the literature, I could find no expert who addressed the portfolio's monetary cost. Likewise, none of the teachers at my university mentioned the monetary cost associated with the portfolio in their responses to the PAQ. This omission in both the literature and by professors at my university might exist because the instructors and researchers are typically not the individuals purchasing the items for the portfolio. Therefore, the thought of cost likely never occurred to them. Many researchers and experts, as well as the instructors at my university, did mention time as a cost and as a major disadvantage (a "cost") to portfolio use. Since professors and pre-service teachers mentioned the time cost so frequently, I have given the cost of time its own category. [See the next section, "The Time Associated with the Portfolio," in this chapter].

Cost: Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Unlike the instructors, the pre-service teachers mentioned cost many times in the PAQ, probably because they obviously bear the burden of paying for the portfolio materials. Still, I was somewhat surprised when I discovered the recurrent issue of cost in the pre-service teacher PAQ answers since it neither arose in the instructor PAQ, nor in any of the literature. After considering the pre-service teachers' perspectives and interests, however, I did find it to be an important point to consider. To complete a portfolio, pre-service teachers must purchase a three-inch binder as well as paper and

numerous plastic cover sheets, all of which can add up to a substantial amount of money.¹⁷ Note the bold-faced type highlights pre-service teachers' references to cost.

Portfolio Cost

- *It's an **expensive** waste of time. Do people realize how much we **spend** on the portfolio? I am **paying** my own way...*
- *...the whole process is so **expensive** when you have **to buy** all the materials to fill all those competencies.*
- ***Cost** is another frustration. The **cost** of the portfolio is frustrating on top of the **cost** of books, tuition and all of the projects that are required of you from every class that you are required to take.*
- *The **money** involved is a concern because they [the professors] expect so much, and we want to make it [the portfolio] look presentable.*
- *... it [the portfolio] gets **money** and time consuming¹⁸ (Appendix H).*

Looking at pre-service teachers' words, this time focusing on the underlined parts, reveals that they "evaluate" the issue of cost using such language as "concern," "frustration," "whole process," "all those competencies," "expect so much." This powerful language reflects their sense of being overwhelmed and perhaps disillusioned. Returning to Perloff's (1993) definition, how does this evaluation of the portfolio's cost direct the pre-service teachers' thoughts and actions toward the portfolio process? Further, how does this evaluation contribute to their overall attitude/evaluation toward the meaning and value of the portfolio process as contributing to their growth? As previously

¹⁷ A typical portfolio at my university contains between 100 and 200 pages. Therefore, the cost for a three-inch binder, plastic sheet covers and dividers might range from \$30 to \$50.

¹⁸ Note the cross over of the "money" and "time" categories.

mentioned, another “cost” that the experts in the literature and the respondents in my research associated with the portfolio is the amount of time spent in portfolio implementation.

The Time Associated with the Portfolio

In the original PAQ’s, many instructors and pre-service teachers seemed concerned about the cost of time, both the instructors’ time evaluating the portfolios and the pre-service teachers’ time spent preparing portfolios. Overall, many of those associated with portfolio implementation see the portfolio as time consuming for both the instructors and pre-service teachers involved in their preparation. Instructors’ and pre-service teachers’ responses concerning “time” reflect researchers’ frequent citing of “time” as a disadvantage for portfolio use (Shulman, 1998; McMillin, 2001; Airasian, 2000; Valencia & Calfee, 1991; see my Chapter 2).

Concerning instructor time, for example, researchers agree that portfolios can be a time-consuming instructor responsibility. Because portfolio design and implementation is a vast process, McMillin (2001) states, “Many hours are needed to design the portfolios and scoring criteria, and many more hours will be spent reviewing, scoring and conferencing with students. . .” (p. 238). Airasian (2000) adds that portfolios require extra time for instructors in the aspects of managing, organizing and record keeping. Researchers also agree that portfolios can be time consuming for the students. Shulman (1998) maintains that the portfolios addressing standards require a considerable time demand for the students, and research has yet to determine the personal costs of the time

required. Lyons (1998c) points out this time issue may impact the students negatively, for students may trivialize portfolios and see them merely as “elaborate scrapbooks” taking much time and preparation (p. 19). Time is indeed an issue for those involved in portfolio implementation. Valencia and Calfee (1991) summarize, “Portfolio assessment is demanding; it requires expertise, time, and commitment” (p. 339). Popham (2002) seems to sigh a reply, “. . . portfolio assessment. . . takes time – loads of time – to carry out properly” (p. 210).

Time: Instructor PAQ

Instructors at my university echoed many of the researchers’ stances concerning the time investment associated with the portfolio. Specifically, the instructors considered “time” in three ways: the time spent grading the portfolios; the time spent on portfolios during class;¹⁹ and time as it affects the pre-service teachers. Note the words in bold-faced type.

Reading and Scoring

- *[I am frustrated with] the length of **time** it takes to sort through and read them [the portfolios].*
- *[I am frustrated with] the **time** it takes to check the portfolios. . . (Appendix I).*

¹⁹ Recall that my university employs only nine full-time education faculty members with 200 pre-service teachers enrolled in the education program in a given semester, so the ratio between instructors and pre-service teacher portfolios is daunting. Also, recall my university’s emphasis on portfolio implementation – see Chapter 1 for discussion of the portfolio benchmark requirements at my university.

Preparation and Instruction

- *It [the portfolio] takes up class **time** that could be used for better topics.*
- *This [the portfolio] is at times pulling my time away from teaching students [pre-service teachers] and class preparation (Appendix I).*

Pre-service Teachers' Time

- *I think it [the portfolio] forces the students [pre-service teachers] to do **a lot of busywork**. . .*
- *. . . they [the portfolios] do take a large portion of the students' [pre-service teachers']. . . **time**.*
- *. . .I would like to see students [pre-service teachers] spending **time** on more practical experience and less on paper work (Appendix I).*

Examining these statements for attitudes/evaluations, focusing on the underlined portions, many instructors are troubled by the time involved in portfolio implementation. Among other expressions of discontent, the professors used such compelling words as “pulling” and “force,” indicating the power and the hold associated with the time spent on portfolios. If the professors appraise the portfolio as being a tool that consumes too much time, then what is the influence of this appraisal on their thoughts and actions toward portfolio implementation? How does this influence affect the pre-service teachers and their opportunities for growth? Perhaps the following statement that questions the portfolio’s worth best summarizes the instructors’ attitudes/evaluations towards the time spent in portfolio preparation:

- *Sometimes I wonder if the results are worth the effort. This [portfolio implementation] is a tedious process (Appendix I).*

Time: Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Pre-service teachers expressed themselves using such expressions as “busywork” and “waste of time” when writing about their time investment in portfolio preparation. Such expressions as “repetitious,” “needless,” and “redundant” reflect their dismay with the duplication of time spent in the portfolio process. Note the words in bold-face type.

Poor Time Investment

- *I believe it is a **waste** of valuable time. Instead of worrying about other important issues in my education, I am forced to work on something that will not even be used after my graduation.*
- *Sometimes I feel that it [the portfolio] is just a burden and **busywork**. . .*
- *I believe that it [the portfolio] is just **busywork** and does not prepare you for teaching.*
- *It [the portfolio] is a **WASTE OF TIME!!!!** [pre-service teacher’s emphasis]*
- *I hate it [the portfolio] and think it’s a **waste of time** (Appendix H).*

Redundancy

- *The portfolio is just extra work that is a **repeat** of work completed and is required for education classes.*

- *There is enough work in the teacher education program that you do not need a portfolio. All a portfolio is is stuff you have already done and you have to go back and **do it again**.*
- *I think the process is **needless and redundant**. . . Why should we have to be essentially graded twice on every project that we do, and by *pannels* [sic] that have different ideas about how things should be done than the classroom teachers? (Appendix H)*

Returning to Perloff's (1993) definition, and focusing on the underlined portions of the pre-service teachers' responses, one can see that the pre-service teachers used passionate language in their evaluation of time involved in portfolio preparation. Words and phrases such as "hate," "burden," "extra work," "waste of time" permeated the time-related responses. This compelling terminology causes one to question the portfolio's meaning and value since many of the pre-service teachers clearly view it as nothing more than a redundant and time-consuming compilation of work. Again, following Perloff's (1993) guidelines, how does this passionate evaluation of portfolio time investment affect how the pre-service teachers think and act in relation to the portfolio process and its potential value to their growth? Would the pre-service teachers' responses concerning organization have an equally passionate evaluation?

The Organization of the Portfolio

Although none of the questions in the original PAQ directly addressed the organization associated with portfolio implementation, several pre-service teachers

mentioned organization as a benefit of portfolio use. Campbell, et al (2001) state that for a portfolio “to be effective it must have a system of organization that is understandable and meaningful” (p. 4). On the whole, however, researchers themselves rarely discuss the value of the portfolio as an organizational tool. Many experts do devote large sections to the discussion of portfolio contents which, in this case, translates into organization. For example, in their book *The Portfolio as a Learning Strategy*, Porter and Cleland (1995) include a thirty-two page chapter entitled “What Should Go into a Portfolio?” Likewise, in a chapter on portfolio assessment in their book *Classroom Assessment: Supporting Teaching and Learning in Real Classrooms*, Taylor and Nolen (2005) discuss the possible entries that might fit into a variety of portfolios, including portfolios for art, math, writing, and science. So, the question remains, does the portfolio help the preparers compile information in a meaningful way? And is it meaningful if the professors and pre-service teachers fail to see the educative meaning and value behind the organizational structure?

Organization: Instructor PAQ

Very few professors spoke directly about portfolio organization when answering their questionnaires. Perhaps the reason they did not do so is the same reason they did not speak to the monetary cost of the portfolio – they are not the ones compiling the artifacts for the portfolio; the pre-service teachers are. Likewise, the experts in the field are more often looking at the final product, not the steps the preparers take to produce the portfolio. Surprisingly, however, the instructors that did speak to this topic addressed the

portfolio in a general sense or suggested that portfolio compilation might be simpler if performed electronically.

The Portfolio in General

- *I think students should be encouraged when they are freshmen to start **portfolio information**. All majors – should start portfolios. . .” (Appendix I).*

Electronic Portfolio

- *Having the artifacts filed and **compiled electronically** would save much time and effort (Appendix I).*

Organization: Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Unlike the professors, many pre-service teachers addressed the organization of the portfolio in their responses to the PAQ. Several claimed it helped them organize their course work to prepare for their teaching careers, while others did not see the organization as a benefit. Again, I emphasize organization using bold-faced type.

Helpful Organizational Structure

- *It [the portfolio] is a good way of getting students [pre-service teachers] to **organize**. . .*
- *Honestly, the main thing it [the portfolio] helped me do was to learn how to **organize**.*
- *. . .I appreciate all of my paperwork being in **one place**.*

- *[The portfolio has helped me] to be **organized**, [to] have articles and papers to read upon for information on topics.*
- *I think the portfolio is a good idea for helping us put our work into an **organized** file.*
- *It [the portfolio] has helped me to be **organized** and responsible. . .*
- *Hey, I'm **keeping** my education books, my notes, papers and portfolio so I can always refer back to anything that would help me teach better or a student learn better (Appendix H)*

Unsatisfactory Organizational Structure

- *[I am frustrated by] the **organization** of it [the portfolio]. The tabs, benchmarks, artifacts all seem to **frustrate me** (Appendix H).*

Returning to the underlined words, one ascertains that respondents' largely optimistic word choices – “good,” “help,” “learn,” and “appreciate” – indicate their evaluation of portfolio organization as a constructive characteristic of portfolio use. Therefore, in terms of attitudes/evaluations, organization is a facet of portfolio implementation that many pre-service teachers see as valuable because completing a portfolio compels the pre-service teachers to organize and file needed materials. Does this one facet of portfolio preparation help the pre-service teachers to see the overall educative meaning and value of the portfolio? If this one category is not alone powerful enough to create optimistic overall attitudes/evaluations, might it be when connected with another category often cited by researchers as constructive, “reflection”?

The Reflection Associated with the Portfolio

John Dewey (1910) describes the reflective thinking process as much more complicated than the two-sentence directive my university provides in its *Teacher Education Handbook*. In fact, Dewey breaks the reflective thinking process into five steps: 1) identification of the problem or difficulty; 2) defining the problem or difficulty; 3) suggesting an explanation or possible solution to the problem; 4) rational elaboration of the suggested solutions; and 5) corroboration of the idea to form a concluding belief. Many researchers cite Dewey when noting the value of reflecting and the portfolio's potential value for helping students think reflectively. Wyatt and Looper (1999) reiterate this point, "The real factor for [portfolio] assessment is the reflection. Reflection is a superior tool for presenting individuals and their work most effectively" (p. 7). Ward & Murray-Ward (1999) state that the portfolio is more meaningful than other forms of evaluation because it "permits more involvement by students. . .by allowing them to. . . reflect on learning over time" (p. 192). McMillin (2001) adds that when using portfolios, "students become actively involved in. . .self-reflection" (p. 236).

In contrast to Dewey's five-step process to reflection, the "Portfolio Template for Artifact" in our university's *Teacher Education Handbook* directs pre-service teachers to write (among other requirements) a "reflective commentary" for each artifact: "Clearly explain why this artifact was selected and how it connects to the specific competency and provides evidence of mastery. Then describe the impact this artifact has made on your professional understanding or growth" (*Teacher Education Handbook*). Although Taylor and Nolen (2005) assert that each step of the portfolio process, including the step of

reflection, must be taught to the students, many pre-service teachers' responses to the PAQ and even in one instructor's answer indicated that the pre-service teachers and perhaps instructors are not "prepared" to reflect. Additionally, if the pre-service teachers and instructors at my university are unfamiliar with such guidelines as Dewey's for in-depth reflection, then it makes sense that confusion concerning the portfolio reflections would exist. If we at my university are failing to teach reflection, can the portfolio process have educative meaning and value since reflection is an integral step in creating a portfolio?

Reflection: Instructor PAQ

Similar to the pre-service teachers' mixed comments on "organization," instructor views were mixed concerning the reflection associated with the portfolio – some viewed reflection as being a helpful tool to the pre-service teachers while others expressed frustration with the reflections. Note the words in bold-faced type.

Reflection as Valuable

- *The [portfolio] does allow the students [pre-service teachers] to **reflect** on their course work and its application in the classroom.*
- *It has made me **reflect** right along with the students [pre-service teachers] about what I've learned in the class.*
- *[The portfolio]. . . allows students [pre-service teachers] to self**reflect** along the way – to ID areas/needs for growth (Appendix I).*

Point of Confusion and Frustration

- *[I am frustrated with] helping students [pre-service teachers] understand how to **reflect** in-depth. As a new faculty member, I think we need some training. Students [Pre-service teachers] were coming to me for help and I didn't have a clue (Appendix I).*

Again, returning to the underlined portions of instructors' responses indicates an overall optimistic evaluation toward portfolio reflection, for the instructors apparently see that reflection is a constructive facet of portfolio implementation. How, then, do the professors' evaluations of reflection affect the pre-service teachers' growth as they reflect as part of the portfolio process, especially when one considers, that, for the most part, pre-service teachers did not share their professors' affirmative evaluation of the portfolio reflections?

Reflection: Pre-service Teacher PAQ

While most instructors responded favorably concerning the reflective process, I found mixed opinions from the pre-service teachers toward the reflection in the portfolio: some pre-service teachers viewed reflection as a valuable component of portfolio implementation; others questioned the reflection process; and others expressed dissatisfaction with the professors' evaluations of their reflections.

Reflection as Valuable

- *It [the portfolio] has **caused me to** take more time to **reflect** on the lesson or experience than I otherwise would have done.*

- **Reflection** has definitely been a **good thing** for me. Most areas of life would improve if people would just take time to stop, reflect, and then try to improve that area. I wish I had learned to reflect at a much younger age (Appendix H).

Questioning Reflection

- Many of the competencies want us to **reflect** on things that we have **no way of reflecting** on [sic]. How can I change something if I haven't presented it? (Appendix H)

Frustration with Professors' Evaluations of Reflections

- **Reflections** are frustrating because mine are usually too short. Then the person **reviewing the portfolio** will say, 'You need to expand on this.' Why? You want to know what it meant to me and I told you. Do you want me to 'B.S.' on my reflection or tell the truth?
- The **reflections** are the part of the portfolio that I do NOT like. I am a very straightforward person and I cannot draw out what I feel into three pages. I state what I feel and would like to move on, but several **professors** say that my **reflections should be longer**.
- I understand that it is very important to **reflect** on my actions taken, but I never seem to put down what my advisor is wanting (Appendix H). [The reader should note that these responses overlap with responses dealing with the mandated portfolio issues which will be examined in a separate section of this chapter].

As mentioned previously, many researchers point out that the reflective aspect of the portfolio is extremely important. Wyatt and Looper (1999) assert, “This reflective section of the process is the part that makes the exercise authentic to the preparer of the portfolio. It establishes the value of the effort that is made in putting the work together” (p. 30). Such underlined wording as “frustrating,” “do not like,” “too short,” “draw out,” reveal that many pre-service teachers at my university do not see the value of their efforts and are confused by the entire reflective process. Unfortunately, it appears that, according to the pre-service teachers, professors at my university need to provide more solid instruction on reflection and perhaps even become more comfortable with the reflection process themselves. Additionally, the instructors need to consider the individuality of the portfolio reflections and to be aware of placing limitations that take away this individuality (i.e., length of reflection, requirements to be included in the reflections, etc.). Recall that researchers often list “individuality” as an advantage of using portfolios, but if the professors are “guiding” the pre-service teachers’ reflections, are they truly individualized? Again, drawing on Perloff’s (1993) definition, how does this evaluation of portfolio reflection influence the pre-service teachers’ thoughts and actions relative to the portfolio, thoughts and actions that would, in principle, influence their growth? Are the pre-service teachers’ attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio as a mandated instrument similar to their attitudes/evaluations toward reflection?

The Portfolio as a Mandated Instrument

Researchers have noted that problems might arise when the portfolio is used as a mandated, wide-scale tool. According to Parsons (1998), students often struggle with completing a mandated portfolio while still maintaining a certain amount of personal freedom and creativity.²⁰ This predicament can often send conflicting messages to the students – “This is your personal portfolio to create any way you like – so long as you give me what I want!” (Parsons, 1998, p. 2). Reis and Villaume (2002) also warn that “little research exists that examines the benefits and tensions that emerge when portfolios are adapted for wide-scale assessment” (p. 10). Using the portfolio on a wide-scale basis must be carefully considered, for Mokhtari, et al, (1996) caution, “...it is not yet clear how or whether such an authentic, continuous, and collaborative process can be used to evaluate all students on a wide-scale basis” (p. 6).

Mandate: Instructor PAQ

Like the categories of cost and organization, none of the instructors spoke directly to the portfolio mandate itself. However, some instructors seemed to be upset by the power that the Oklahoma legislature, supported by a commission on higher education, has to mandate such a tool. Although the Oklahoma Commission mandates the portfolio, not NCATE,²¹ even the instructors at my university directly connect the portfolio with the

²⁰ In the PAQ, the pre-service teachers noted this lack of individuality in their discussion of reflection as well as in their discussion of the portfolio as a mandated instrument.

²¹ NCATE is the abbreviation for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

accreditation process, thus revealing the multiple foci of portfolio implementation. This confusion no doubt adds to the negativity often associated with portfolio use.

Oklahoma Mandate

- We need to keep the students [pre-service teachers] in mind and what might serve them in their future, not **NCATE**.
- Governing boards may have too much control over what we are and accomplish. Who do we work for? Students [pre-service teachers] or **NCATE**? (Appendix I).

Mandate: Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Unlike the professors, the pre-service teachers expressed multiple views toward the portfolio mandate. Many of them articulated confusion concerning the root of the mandate itself; others questioned the benefits of the portfolio mandate as well as the reasoning behind the mandate; others maintained the mandated portfolio to be a high-pressure mechanism; while still others noted the portfolio to be miseducative since does not reflect their own work. Note the bold-faced type:

Confusion Concerning the Portfolio Mandate

- Nobody likes it [the portfolio] and we are forced to do this because of **some grant**.
- Why does Oklahoma **require** this and not other states? (Appendix H)
- Personally, I feel that it's a way for the school to be evaluated for their **accreditation** and not much for our [pre-service teachers'] benefit (Appendix H).

Questioning the Portfolio Mandate

- I think **they just want** something time consuming for the students [pre-service teachers] to do so they can say the education department is hard. Which it kind of is, but the portfolio is just too much (Appendix H).

The Portfolio as a High Pressure Mechanism

- I don't feel we should live or die by them.
- I feel that there is **too much emphasis** on the portfolio. [The] education department makes it a life or death subject.
- It [the portfolio] places a **great deal of stress** on me.
- It should not be our **livelihood for graduating**. I don't know how much **weight** it actually carries. That should be discussed with students [pre-service teachers] so they know where it stands.
- ...don't make it such a big deal (Appendix H).

The Portfolio as Miseducative

- If we have to do it, let it be what we want, not what the education **department wants us to say!**
- It's **not my own work**. WE have to do it to the specifications of the school and it seems to me that it's more of how the school wants to appear than what the student [pre-service teacher] has actually achieved or learned.
- I have not put honest thoughts into it because I put what the **reviewers want to see** (Appendix H).

Again, analyzing the underlined expressions reveals that pre-service teachers used strong language in their evaluations of the portfolio as a mandated tool – “not my own work,” “forced,” “have to do it” “great deal of stress,” “live or die.” Among the evaluations, a startling attitude/evaluation surfaced in this category – some of the pre-service teachers distrust the portfolio process at my university, questioning the portfolio’s benefit. If they distrust the tool, how can they see it as having any educative meaning or value? Additionally, as mentioned previously in the section on “reflection,” many of the pre-service teachers clearly dislike responding to mandated standards and guidelines, claiming that writing to mandates takes away their individuality. These powerful attitudes/evaluations no doubt influence the pre-service teachers’ thoughts and actions in relation to the portfolio. Similar attitudes/evaluations arose yet again when the PAQ respondents discussed the portfolio competencies themselves.

The Portfolio Competencies

Portfolios that require the preparers to address specific competencies or standards are becoming more commonplace. For example, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards requires specific assessment items in a portfolio format for all teachers wanting to gain national board certification (Wyatt and Looper, 1999). In the teacher education setting, pre-service teachers typically collect artifacts for specific competencies. Wyatt and Looper (1999) clarify, “The artifacts generally are structured around professional standards and individual/university goals.” As mentioned previously, my university incorporates within the portfolio assignment the guidelines set

forth in the “Oklahoma General Competencies for Teacher Licensure and Certification” plus one additional competency my university added. The portfolio is the means through which pre-service teachers demonstrate that they are meeting the competencies. [See Appendix B for the complete listing of the competencies as they are arranged at this university].

Is this format consistent with the individuality researchers recommend (Ward & Murray-Ward, 1999; McMillin 2001; Wyatt and Looper, 1999) for portfolio usage? Is this use of addressing specific competencies a step toward “dumbing down” the curriculum and/or at least teaching toward the test? Although many professor respondents found the competencies beneficial, the pre-service teachers noted this apparently prescriptive nature of our university’s portfolio in many of their responses to the PAQ.

Competencies: Instructor PAQ

In the PAQ, the instructors revealed several views toward the portfolio competencies. Some claimed they use the competencies to help guide their instruction while others expressed confusion and even irritation concerning the competencies. Again, note the bold-faced type:

Competencies as Helpful

- *I try to match what I teach with the **standards** more than I used to. I don’t have projects **‘just because’** any more.*
- *I am more conscious of providing handouts that help students [pre-service teachers] meet the **requirements** [of the portfolio].*

- *I am more careful to structure my classes around the national **standards**.*
- *[The portfolio] directs more focus on **standards** set forth by NCATE.*
- *I pay more attention to teaching requirements and **competencies**. (Appendix I).*

Competencies as a Frustration

- *[I am frustrated with] the **subjectivity** of the **standards**. . .”*
- *[I feel frustration with] students [pre-service teachers] wanting a very **prescriptive** set of guidelines. . . rather than analyzing what would best fit (Appendix I).*

The attitudinal statements in this category reveal that instructors possibly have mixed or even undecided attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio competencies. Although competencies can help guide instruction, responding to mandated competencies might indeed pose many difficult situations for the instructors and for the portfolio preparers. In fact, in their PAQ the pre-service teachers expressed much anxiety concerning the state portfolio competencies.

Competencies: Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Typically, pre-service teachers mentioned the competencies when asked what was frustrating about the portfolio (question #3 on PAQ). Some maintained that the wording of the competencies was frustrating; others questioned being able to master the competencies in an undergraduate setting; while still others stated that the competencies were too prescriptive. Note the bold-faced type:

Competencies as a Frustration

- *[I am frustrated with] the many artifacts and the wording of the **competencies**.
It's difficult to find artifacts that exactly fit the competencies*
- *I think it is frustrating that you cannot easily find one artifact per competency.*
- *I feel as if the **competencies** should be worded to where the students [pre-service teachers] could better understand what is required of them. Some competencies are not understandable (Appendix H).*

Mastery of Competencies

- *I feel a student [pre-service teacher] cannot show mastery of these **competencies** until he/she teaches in a classroom. I feel it would be more beneficial if the student [pre-service teacher] was asked to complete a portfolio after the first year of teaching (Appendix H).*

Competencies as too Prescriptive

- *I think the portfolios are a good idea in theory; however, they are becoming a **standardized** assessment format (Appendix H).*

Again, noting the underlined words, the pre-service teachers used powerful language to evaluate the portfolio competencies: “not understandable,” “frustrating,” “difficult,” and “cannot show mastery.” One pre-service teacher even pointed out the portfolio’s prescriptive nature, fearing that it is becoming “a standardized assessment format.” Notably, the prescriptive nature of the standards has now emerged in three data categories, “reflection,” “competencies” and “the portfolio mandate.” Do the evaluations

of the portfolio competencies as “not understandable,” “not showing mastery” and as “standardized assessment” influence the pre-service teachers’ thinking and acting as they develop this portfolio which would, in principle, contribute to their growth? Further, what do these evaluations say about the meaning and value pre-service teachers place on the portfolio?

The Portfolio’s Educative Meaning and Value

As mentioned in earlier chapters, although many experts (Porter & Cleland, 1995; Wyatt & Looper, 1999; Tierney et al., 1991; Lyons, 1998a; Lyons, 1998b; Lyons 1998c) assert the benefits of portfolio use, some researchers warn that portfolios are disadvantageous when misused. Taylor and Nolen (2005) comment:

When well done, portfolios can be powerful assessment tools that help students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, to see their own growth, and to document their progress toward meeting standards. Alternately, if done poorly, portfolios can be annoying burdens for teachers and students (p. 310).

Overall, does my university’s portfolio serve the pre-service teachers as a “powerful assessment tool” or is it more of an “annoying burden” for them? Is my university’s portfolio an educative tool that promotes pre-service teachers’ growth? Instructors’ and pre-service teachers’ attitudes/evaluations in this regard undoubtedly have a powerful influence on their thoughts and actions toward the portfolio process.

Educative Meaning and Value: Instructor PAQ

The instructor PAQ revealed mixed views toward the portfolio's educational value. Several of the instructors in the original PAQ agreed with the researchers, expressing the portfolio experience to be favorable for the pre-service teachers, and therefore, of educational value for them (Porter & Cleland, 1995; Wyatt & Looper, 1999; Tierney et al., 1991; Lyons, 1998a; Lyons, 1998b; Lyons 1998). On the other hand, some instructors maintained the portfolio to be of little or no use to the pre-service teachers; while still others noted the high pressure nature of the portfolio and how this excessive pressure affects the pre-service teachers. (Note that most of the comments in this category contain attitudinal language).

The Portfolio as Having Educative Value

- *In this **age of accountability**, it is good for our students [pre-service teachers] to be able to show what they have learned, and teachers to show what is taught through performance-based activities.*
- *Hopefully, they [the pre-service teachers] could **transfer the knowledge learned from their experience to tackle any problem** they have in their system (standards, performances, etc.).*
- *My **VISION** is that candidates [pre-service teachers] would **use** the portfolio as a **life-long professional development tool**, identifying areas of weakness where additional professional development is needed (Appendix I).*

The Portfolio as Having Little Educative Value

- *Most students [pre-service teachers] will never use it again other than for **graduation requirements**.*
- *Most students [pre-service teachers] will never, ever use it again.*
- *[I am frustrated by] the **size and volume** of it [the portfolio] and the **pressure** put on the students [pre-service teachers] at Benchmark #4*
- *It is one more hoop the students [pre-service teachers] have to complete for their program.*
- *Overall, I feel it's probably more trouble to the students [pre-service teachers] than it's worth.*
- *The portfolio process has become a major burden for teacher candidates [pre-service teachers] and faculty. What began as a good idea and a useful project has become a reason why good candidates [pre-service teachers] choose other fields.*
- *I wonder if the burden of preparing a portfolio is keeping some people out of the education field or perhaps driving them to seek alternate certification (Appendix I).*

By looking at the underlined words and phrases, most of the instructors appear to question the educative meaning and value of the portfolio for the pre-service teachers, using powerful words and phrases to evaluate the portfolio process at our university: “burden,” “more trouble than it’s worth,” and “hoop.” How does this compelling evaluation of the portfolio’s impact affect the pre-service teachers’ growth through the entire portfolio process at my university? Since many of the pre-service teachers also

view the portfolio as having little educative meaning and value, what is the effect of this powerful evaluation?

Educative Meaning and Value: Pre-service Teacher PAQ

Similar to the instructors, the pre-service teachers had mixed views toward the portfolio's educational value. Some of the pre-service teachers maintained the portfolio's value; others did not see the value of completing a portfolio; while still others had mixed views toward the portfolio's value. (Again, note that most of the comments in this category contain attitudinal language.)

The Portfolio as Having Educative Value

- *I think the teaching portfolio is very **beneficial** to have.*
- *I do believe the portfolio has helped me **grow professionally**.*
- *Overall, I think the process of completing a professional portfolio is **meaningful** and **beneficial** (Appendix H).*

The Portfolio as Having Little Educative Value

- *Wow! It is such a huge, messy process. I watched my mom do the portfolio and then I **changed my major!!!**²² (Appendix H)*
- *I think the portfolio tends to **draw** some pre-education majors **out of the business**.*

²² This pre-service teacher indicated on her PAQ that she had dropped the teacher education program. However, she was enrolled in the education course EDUC 3413, Foundations of Reading, at the time I administered the PAQ. She stated that she was staying in the class because it would count as an elective for her newly chosen major field of study.

- *It's [the portfolio] frustrating because it's **nothing I can use**. It seems to me that there are people in education who should not be teachers. Because of this there are mountains of paper work to create standards, but **a standard not only brings bad teachers up to par, but also drags down good teachers**. Teaching is a gift, not a degree.*
- *I think the portfolio is a great way to **assess learning**, but the student [pre-service teacher] who successfully completes the portfolio **may not be a good teacher**. I believe through experience one develops professionally (Appendix H).*
- *Let's judge teacher candidates [pre-service teachers] on their **teaching abilities** and **not** as much on their **ability to organize and create documents for a portfolio** that honestly has no real weight further into their professional career.*
- *...let's face it. A student [pre-service teacher] could have an **awesome portfolio** but be the **worst teacher** in the world while a student [pre-service teacher] with an **average portfolio** holds the **potential** to be a **great teacher**. That avg. portfolio may never get a chance to develop that potential based on his/her portfolio (Appendix H).*

Indifferent and/or Contradictory Views of the Portfolio

- *I try to be **positive** and believe that it is a **useful tool**, but sometimes I have a negative attitude because of all the **work involved**.*
- *I think the portfolio is a good idea to some extent.*
- *Now that I have it together and almost finished, it was not that bad (Appendix H).*

Looking at the underlined words, one can see that, while a few respondents evaluate the portfolio as having value, the majority see it in as having little educative meaning and value. Again, returning to Perloff's (1993) definition, the pre-service teachers use passionate language – “too much emphasis,” “life or death,” “stress,” “frustrating,” “huge, messy process” – for evaluating the portfolio's meaning and value. How does this fervent evaluation affect how the pre-service teachers think and act toward the portfolio? Does the portfolio at my university serve as a tool for our pre-service teachers' growth? I became especially concerned when I realized that a particular hallway discussion among the pre-service teachers (and a concern about which several faculty members had expressed alarm in their PAQ) might be true: the pre-service teachers' thoughts concerning the portfolio are directing their actions in a very powerful way: they may actually be changing majors or dropping the education part of their programs because of the portfolio.

Discussion of Data Analysis

I administered the PAQ to learn instructors' and pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations toward portfolio implementation and to have enough information to formulate questions for the next step of the study, the focus group. Both the instructor and pre-service teacher PAQs provided insight into the attitudes/evaluations toward the mandated education portfolio at my university. Through my analysis, I was able to support much of the existing research concerning portfolio implementation: the topic of time as a major disadvantage for portfolio implementation; the issue of reflection as it is

associated with portfolio use; and the concerns surrounding the use of a standards-driven portfolio. My analysis revealed two issues not found in the existing literature: the monetary cost as a concern in portfolio implementation and portfolio organization as a benefit of portfolio implementation. Certainly, if a pre-service teacher evaluates the money spent on the portfolio as a poor investment, he or she will not be enthusiastic about portfolio preparation. If pre-service teachers see the value of the portfolio as an organizational tool, then perhaps they would be more eager to invest time into a meaningful experience to which they assign value.

Contrary to the existing literature's "biased" view of the portfolio which favors the portfolio in spite of the heavy weight on disadvantages, my data analysis revealed many questions concerning the meaning and value of the portfolio. Overall, the respondents maintained that the actual completion of a portfolio does not always bring about a "clear picture" (Campbell, et al, 2001) of one's pre-service educational experiences. In fact, many instructors and pre-service teachers claimed that the entire portfolio process at my university, due to a variety of reasons, actually clouds learning and has little educative meaning or value to the preparers.

Analyzing the data using Perloff's (1993) definition of "attitude," I discovered the instructors' and pre-service teachers' "learned, enduring, global evaluation" of the portfolio reveals that they definitely question the meaning and value of the portfolio and think and act towards it in relation to their misgivings, perhaps even leading pre-service teachers' to leave the program because of it. The huge amount of emphasis my university places on the portfolio because of the state mandate no doubt influences the professors and pre-service teachers in a number of ways. Drawing on the Merriam-Webster Online

Dictionary, a “phenomenon” is “an exceptional, unusual, or abnormal person, thing, or occurrence.” The portfolio at my university has indeed turned into an exceptional occurrence of great magnitude, a phenomenon.

After analyzing the data from the PAQ, I sought answers to more poignant questions I would pose to pre-service teachers in an interview session. I used the PAQ data to formulate these questions; and I formed a focus group that would expand upon topics which most frequently came up in the PAQ and explore contradictions and “new” concerns about the portfolio which might arise in a conversational setting. I further sought to ascertain if data from this second qualitative approach would align with the research and PAQ responses, seeking triangulation of my data. In Chapter 5, I will examine the results from the pre-service teacher focus group.

CHAPTER V

Data Analysis Part II – The Pre-Service Teacher Focus Group

“I feel that probably over 90% or more of teaching is how you interact with kids and how you get along with kids. And the portfolio does not measure that” (Appendix G).

Analyzing the responses in the pre-service teacher and instructor PAQ’s gave direction to my research, for this analysis illuminated how my data aligned or failed to align with existing research and revealed parallels, incongruities, and recurrent topics between both sets of data. I created and interviewed pre-service teachers for a focus group session to discover if the focus group responses would triangulate with the existing research and PAQ responses. As a reminder, Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the triangulation process as validating each piece of information against at least one other source and/or a second method. They stress, “No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated” (p. 283). I also wanted to explore further challenges, deficiencies, and “new” points about the portfolio which might arise in a conversational setting where the pre-service teachers would have a chance to elaborate on their views.

I repeat the nine questions/prompts I asked during the focus group interview session and my rationale for asking these questions. I based my rationale on what I hoped

to discover in the focus group session: verification of the PAQ data, verification of the pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations concerning the value of the portfolio, and detection of additional pertinent information.

Table 5
Focus Group Questions

QUESTION/PROMPT	RATIONALE
1. First, please go around the room and tell your major and year of expected graduation.	Question 1 – To find out educational details about each participant.
2. Please discuss the issues of time and cost associated with the creation of the portfolio.	Questions 2 through 6 – To verify the broad categories in which I had sorted my PAQ data.
3. Several in the original questionnaire mentioned the organization aspect of the portfolio. Please elaborate.	
4. Many mentioned the “reflection” when answering the original questionnaire. Please speak to the reflections that were a part of your portfolio.	
5. Please discuss why you think the state of Oklahoma and [our university] require the portfolio in the first place.	
6. Please discuss the wording of the competencies themselves.	
7. Will the compilation of the portfolio make you a better teacher?	Questions 7 & 8 – To gauge the pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations concerning the value of the portfolio and to see if these attitudes/evaluations aligned with attitudes/evaluations revealed in the pre-service teacher PAQ.
8. Do you think that a poor portfolio is indicative of a poor teacher?	
9. Is there anything further you would like to add concerning the portfolio preparation process?	Question 9 – To ensure that focus group members would have a chance to address anything left unsaid.

Because questions two through six were to help verify categories from the PAQ, in this chapter I will return to those categories and analyze the data gathered from the focus group for its alignment with the research and with the categories from the initial survey. I expected a certain degree of triangulation since I asked many of the focus group questions based on PAQ responses. Because I designed questions seven and eight to gauge attitudes/evaluations, I knew that new categories might emerge. Indeed, a category did emerge from these questions: the “benefits” of the portfolio. Finally, when I analyzed data for new issues and insights which might arise in the focus group context, some interesting points emerged that I had not previously noted in my PAQ analysis. In the final chapter, I will examine these findings in light of John Dewey’s concept of education as growth.

As a reminder, I formed the focus group by inviting participants from the original questionnaire (fall of 2003) to interact in the focus group (January 2004). My recruitment entailed inviting participants from ED3913 (Principles and Methods of Teaching) and ED3032 (Measurement and Evaluation) to participate by giving them the time and date of the focus group session. I chose these two classes from which to invite pre-service teachers because they were my classes and were, therefore, easily accessible to me and because the two classes would contain a good cross section of participants according to content area majors, ages, and levels of preparation. [See Chapter 3 for further details].

Because of scheduling conflicts, five of the nine participants chosen were able to participate in the focus group, one male and four females. The male is a health and physical education major who is also working on his elementary and special education certifications; his expected date of graduation is May 2005. One of the females is a

secondary science major with the expected date of graduation of May 2004 (she was conducting her student teaching at the time of the focus group). Another female is a health and physical education major who plans to graduate in December 2004. And the final two females are both elementary majors who plan to graduate in May 2005. [See Appendix D for the focus group participation form].

The focus group met at my home, and I provided a casual supper for the participants to help create an informal atmosphere. Remembering Bushnell's (2003) statement, "the results of such [qualitative] methods are necessarily subjective" (2003), I understood that, as a qualitative researcher highly involved with the portfolio process at my university (as discussed fully in Chapter 3), my inherent subjectivity would influence the conversation. Ely, et al (2001) point out that the researcher's values naturally arise in qualitative data collection methods: ". . . as researchers our stances, our angles of repose, do affect what we are interested in, the questions we ask, the foci of our study, and the methods of collection. . ." (p. 38). Keeping the inherent subjectivity of the study in mind, I sought to maintain the trustworthiness of the study by examining and understanding my own biases before conducting the focus group session. Rubin and Rubin (1995) state, "By being aware of your own specialized vocabulary and cultural assumptions, you are less likely to impose your own opinions on the interviewees" (p. 19). Although I could only react with laughter and facial expressions to some of the participants' comments, I realized, as Ely, et al (2001), Bushnell (2003) and Rubin and Rubin (1995) assert, that my involvement with the portfolio at my university and my stances toward pre-service teachers' growth and education in general, along with my vocabulary and cultural assumptions, had already contributed to the study's subjectivity by influencing how I

focused the study, the questions I posed for both parts of the study, and certainly my data analysis and interpretation. I did not document my reactions, for I sought to focus only on the pre-service teachers' views to sway neither their views nor their conversation and at this juncture to serve as reporter rather than a contributor to the conversation that would unfold before me. The focus group met for a total of sixty-five minutes; I audio-taped the conversation that ensued. To analyze the data, I first listened several times to the tape recording from the focus group session, eventually transcribing the conversation, starting and stopping the tape as needed. Then, reading through the transcription to check for accuracy, I coded (Ely, 2001, p. 162) the comments according to the seven categories identified earlier, and finally, as Ely (2001, p. 175) suggests, made notes in the margins of the transcription to point out additional categories which emerged.

Analysis of the focus group data revealed triangulation among the research, the instructor and pre-service teacher PAQ's, and the focus group in the time involved in portfolio implementation and the portfolio competencies. The focus group analysis also aligned with the instructor and pre-service teacher PAQ responses in the reflection associated with the portfolio, the portfolio as a mandated instrument, and the portfolio's educative meaning and value. Finally, the focus group data aligned with the pre-service teacher PAQ responses in the categories of the cost associated with the portfolio and the organization of the portfolio.

Because the natural flow of conversation often reveals deeper understanding of the topic being discussed, I will duplicate the focus group's conversational tone by relating the focus group data in a narrative fashion. Additionally, I introduce the pre-service teachers' comments using their pseudonyms to protect their identity while still

providing a means for following different pre-service teachers' perspectives, for retaining the context in which they make their statements, and thereby for establishing the means for gaining further insight into their attitudes/evaluations of the portfolio. I continue to use Richard M. Perloff's (1993) definition to perform what I call "attitude analysis" – exploring the participants' words for attitudinal language, language that revealed evaluations of the portfolio's many facets. Specifically, my attitude analysis explored the participants' words for attitudinal language, in order to discover the instructors' and pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio that affect their thoughts and actions relative to the portfolio. Since much of the data is obviously repeated from the original PAQ, I will go through it quickly, highlighting the differences and/or new information that emerged in each category.²³

The Cost Associated with the Portfolio

As I found in the pre-service teacher PAQ, the focus group session revealed a variety of perceptions toward the first category, the monetary cost of the portfolio – some focus group members claimed the cost did not affect them in any way, while others maintained the cost to be prohibitive. For example, Anne²⁴, the secondary science major, and Jenny, the female health and physical education major, agreed that the portfolio process was so gradual that they did not notice the cost involved:

- *As far as the cost goes, I guess I just did it so gradually that I didn't even notice*
(Appendix G – Anne).

²³ As in chapter 4, I will emphasize participants' words and phrases that address the categories in **bold** type, and I will emphasize participants' words and phrases that address attitudes/evaluations in underlined type.

²⁴ All names are pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities.

- *The **cost** really wasn't a big deal to me (Appendix G- Jenny).*

On the other hand, one of the female elementary majors, Jill, claimed the cost (both the cost of time and the cost in a monetary sense) to be prohibitive. She stated,

- *For me, the time and the **cost** is [sic] pretty big because I just started my portfolio in the fall, and I interviewed in the fall as well. And so it was just all at once – having to spend all my time to do that and all my money to do that. So for me the cost and everything was bad (Appendix G).*

In analyzing the focus group comments for attitudes/evaluations, I was able to clarify the reasoning behind the variety of views toward the monetary cost I saw in the PAQ: the pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations concerning portfolio cost is dependent upon the respondents' individual circumstances. Perloff's (1993) definition helps explain the pre-service teachers' thoughts and actions in relation to the issue of cost. Those who evaluate the portfolio cost as a disadvantage might contend the money involved puts additional stress on them, perhaps causing resentment that has little to do with the portfolio process and more with cost, thus directing the way they think and act relative to the portfolio. On the other hand, those unconcerned about monetary cost would not be influenced in any way in relation to this category. A much more detailed discussion arose in the focus group, however, when discussing the cost of time.

The Time Associated with the Portfolio

During the focus group session, I found many of the same attitudes/evaluations towards the time involved with portfolio preparation as I found in both the instructor and pre-service teacher PAQ's, especially the pre-service teachers' concerns about duplicating their time investment. Some focus group members expressed concern about the redundancy involved in portfolio preparation, while others maintained that the portfolio takes too much time away from regular classroom activities, both issues that also came out in the PAQ. First, when asked about the time associated with portfolio preparation, both the female secondary science major, Anne, and Jenny stated their dissatisfaction with the redundancy of the portfolio artifacts that consumed much of their time. Note the bold-faced type.

- *Time – it was kind of frustrating – just for the simple fact that it seemed like we would **create** something for the classroom then have to go back and **recreate** the same thing to put in our portfolio. It seemed really redundant to me in a lot of ways, and I think that's what frustrated me most. I wouldn't mind if it took time to do if I felt like the time was valid (Appendix G – Anne).*
- *. . . you create it for the classroom then have to go **re-create** it (Appendix G – Jenny).*

The male health and physical education/elementary education major, Dustin, added his view on the time consuming aspect of the portfolio with a twist, noting that class time would be better spent learning information that will help him be a better teacher, not on portfolio preparation:

- *The classes – it seems like now all the education classes are centered around the portfolio. The teachers try to adapt what they’re doing in class to put in your portfolio. But whenever it takes over the whole class and the whole class is just to fulfill your portfolio assignments – I think it’s a bunch of bull because, you know, ***I want to be taught what’s going to make me a better teacher, not what looks good on paper that no one’s likely to look at anyways [sic] once you get out of college. Very time consuming*** (Appendix G).*

Reiterating Dustin’s concern of the portfolio taking up too much class time, other focus group participants also seemed disturbed that the portfolio interfered with their regular classroom learning experiences. More specifically, Anne felt the portfolio interrupted the “flow” of the class since it takes time away from what she should be learning:

- *[We need to be learning] stuff that matters...like how to interact with the kids.* (Appendix G).

Examining the underlined expressions for attitudes/evaluations, it becomes clear that the focus group members, like many of the respondents in the PAQ, use strong language when evaluating the time involved in portfolio preparation: “bunch of bull,” “frustrating,” “recreate,” and “redundant.” Again, following Perloff’s (1993) guidelines, how does this fervent evaluation of portfolio preparation time affect how the pre-service teachers think and act in relation to the portfolio process? If the portfolio is a “bunch of bull,” how can the pre-service teachers see it as a meaningful and valuable contributor to their growth?

The Organization of the Portfolio

The focus group's tone concerning organization of the portfolio was optimistic at first but became more pessimistic as the conversation progressed. Some of the participants contended that organization was a helpful facet of the portfolio process, while others questioned the "set" portfolio organization, believing that organization is a personal matter. For example, at first some agreed that the portfolio did help them to organize:

- *.It IS an **organized** way of putting things down. . .(Appendix G – Anne).*
- *I think the portfolio itself is very **organized**, because it tells you exactly where to put things in. . . [sic] (Appendix G – Jenny).*

Then Dustin added, in a sarcastic manner,

- *If you want to be that **organized** and put everything down on paper and evaluate somebody by their paperwork, then it's really organized – down to the last tab (Appendix G).*

The focus group members concluded that the portfolio organization was a difficult process because pre-service teachers have different organizational styles. As mentioned in Chapter 2, some researchers claim a portfolio advantage to be individualization, a trait that the focus group members failed to see when discussing portfolio organization. For example, Anne stated,

- *Nobody **organizes** things in the same way (Appendix G).*

At that point, the conversation turned away from the organization of the portfolio and focused on preparing a "passing" portfolio at our university. Likely, the casual

structure of the focus group session encouraged the participants to talk freely through issues until they arrived at what seemed “important” to them. In this case, simply passing the portfolio at our university seemed more significant to the focus group members than did the organization of the portfolio. An interesting question arises: do the organizational factors influence the way pre-service teachers evaluate the portfolio, or do the pre-service teachers’ “learned” attitudes/evaluations (“learned” from previous graduates and those further along in the portfolio process) influence their perception of its organization? In the PAQ the pre-service teachers evaluated the organization of the portfolio using positive language. The focus group members’ attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio as an organizational tool began positive but turned cloudy, perhaps because mutually dependent, reciprocal relations between attitudes/evaluations and performances affected the conversation. As the focus groups’ frustrated conversational tone increased based on their general evaluations towards the portfolio, their frustration toward the portfolio organization also increased. The focus group members articulated even stronger opinions toward the portfolio reflections than toward organization.

The Reflection Associated with the Portfolio

The focus group clearly confirmed the problems concerning reflection that emerged in the questionnaires (PAQ’s). Overall, the focus group participants expressed frustration about the reflections they had to write for the portfolio. Specifically, the focus group members expressed concern about the length of the portfolio reflections, the professors making the reflections too prescriptive, and the actual reflection writing. First,

Dustin and Anne both stated that they did not like having to stretch the reflections just to make the professors happy:

- *I can get you to believe something or not in **two paragraphs**. It don't [sic] take me two pages (Appendix G – Dustin).*
- *I'm very **short, sweet and to the point**. I write for me – very good reflections as to things that I felt like I did well in that competency, things I feel like I could change to make better. But they [the instructors] always throw my portfolio back at me and say, 'Make these longer'' (Appendix G – Anne).*

Those in the focus group certainly added depth to the comparatively superficial PAQ responses concerning the prescriptive nature of reflection at our university,

- *That's the thing that frustrates me – is that they [the professors] seem to have to **mandate your thoughts** even²⁵ (Appendix G – Anne).*

Jenny agreed and pointed out that all a student [pre-service teacher] has to do to complete a reflection is to rewrite the competency itself in the reflection. Dustin smiled and concurred with her, saying,

- *They like it when you do that (Appendix G).*

Confirming a concern from the PAQ, one of the two female elementary majors, Katie, said the reflections confused her, since different professors told her different ways to write them. Then Jenny reiterated that the portfolio reflections do not necessarily echo her own thoughts,

- *You don't have to be **reflective** at all about it. You just have to put in what they want to hear in it (Appendix G).²⁶*

²⁵ Note how this comment ties into the focus group discussion of the prescriptive nature of the portfolio competencies.

Returning to Perloff's (1993) definition of "attitude" as a "learned, global evaluation," the focus group members evaluate the portfolio reflections through such language as – "frustrate," "throw my portfolio back at me" "put in what they want to hear." Adding another dimension to the concern – is reflection at my university so prescriptive that the pre-service teachers themselves perceive that it is no longer reflection at all, is therefore miseducative, and perhaps even anti- educational? The pre-service teachers' questioning of reflection at my university illuminates the gap that exists between reflection theory and reflection practice. Indeed, our *Teacher Education Handbook's* brief instructions for reflection fall short of what researchers and such frequently cited theorists as John Dewey²⁷ recommend for true reflection. Does this gap exist because professors' lack of knowledge concerning reflection and/or because "mandate" and "reflection" are inherently contradictory?

The Portfolio as a Mandated Instrument

Mirroring the confusion indicated in the PAQ responses, the focus group members expressed uncertainty about the portfolio mandate, viewing the rationale for creating and implementing the portfolio in various ways. Some participants contend that the portfolio is a means to help evaluate the education program, others questioned the purpose altogether, while still others added that the portfolio's purpose is to turn out "quality" teachers. Katie maintained that the portfolio's purpose is to evaluate the education program:

²⁶ Again, this comment ties in directly with the focus group members' discussion of the prescriptive nature of the portfolio competencies.

²⁷ See a brief discussion of Dewey's reflective thinking process in Chapter 4.

- *...all my teachers tell me that the portfolio is to **evaluate the education program**...which makes me think to my own self, the reason why we have to keep going back and doing things over is so **the education program will look good**.
And it has **nothing to do with our ability to teach** (Appendix G).*

Dustin asked if our university was the only one in the state that required the portfolio, so he certainly had no knowledge of the Oklahoma mandate. The focus group participants also speculated about why the portfolio might be mandated in the first place:

- *Well, I hope that they're just trying to make sure that they turn out **quality teachers**. . .(Appendix G – Anne).*
- *It's [the portfolio] supposed to make sure they're turning out **quality and competent teachers**, but I guess I feel that probably 90% or more of teaching is how you interact with kids and how you get along with kids. And the portfolio does not measure that (Appendix G – Jenny).*

Examining the underlined words and phrases for attitudes/evaluations – “trying to make sure,” “supposed to make sure,” “I guess I feel,” “does not measure” – it appears that, similar to the comments in the pre-service teacher PAQ, the focus group members have an unclear picture of the reasoning behind the portfolio mandate. After discussing the mandate, however, it became obvious that the focus group participants are very aware of their role in the often intense, high-stakes preparation process: they must create and organize the portfolio; they must compile the artifacts and write the accompanying reflections; they must pass each benchmark before proceeding to the next level; and they must complete all work at all benchmarks before earning certification and licensure. Recall that many researchers warn against portfolios with multiple purposes/goals. My

data validates this warning as something one should heed, for at my university what the warnings predict about portfolio misuse have come true. The entire portfolio procedure creates confusion because of the portfolio's ambiguous purposes and sends mixed signals to those on the "evidence" end of the mandate – "The portfolio process is for the program to pass accreditation, but you get to do the work!"

The Portfolio Competencies

When asked about the portfolio competencies, the focus group participants discussed the wording of the competencies themselves; the pre-service teachers' performance level in relation to the competencies; the competencies' prescriptive nature; and items omitted in the competencies. First, after the focus group members referred to the competencies as "vague" and "not measurable" (Appendix G), Anne wondered,

- *I want to know who came up with these things and if they were even actually teaching themselves because, I'm sorry, anybody who has any practical knowledge of trying to teach kids **would not word something that way**. It would be very clear and concise as to what you want (Appendix G).*

Jill agreed, adding,

- *When we write lesson plans, we have to write **clear objectives**. And those objectives [the portfolio competencies] **aren't clear** (Appendix G).*

The focus group discussion concerning the competencies also revealed the pre-service teachers' concern about being able to fulfill competencies before spending time in an actual teaching situation. Anne stated,

- ...the thing that probably frustrated me most in getting my portfolio **through Benchmark 3** was simply the fact that there's [sic] at least four of those competencies that, I'm sorry, you **cannot fill until you student teach**. It is completely asinine to ask us to have an artifact for those whenever you're just going to take it out anyway, when it's just **something that you've made up** that you have no idea if it's going to work because you haven't done it yet (Appendix G).

After this comment, much agreement and even laughter emerged. Dustin joked,

- What teaching style do you use?' I don't know. **Let me get my portfolio out and I'll tell ya**. It's in here somewhere (Appendix G).

Coinciding with PAQ comments concerning reflection and the portfolio mandate, the issue of the portfolio being too prescriptive also arose in the focus' group discussion. Confirming the concern I expressed in Chapter 4 about portfolio preparation at my university actually "dumbing down" the curriculum and being similar to teaching to a test, Jenny commented,

- ...**they tell you** what to put in **each competency**. I hate that. It drives me insane. It's just **like teaching to a test** (Appendix G).

Again, speaking to the "individualization" that emerged in Chapter 2, Anne went as far as to call it "all a lie" because,

- You're doing it how **somebody else wants you to do it** (Appendix G).

Dustin added,

- I'm a great 'B.S.er.' I can probably go through this portfolio – you give me a week, and I can probably have **all the stuff** I need for it right now on my desk. I

*could probably do my portfolio in a week and it'd be done. And they're going to totally **evaluate me on that, instead of what I'm good at** [sic] (Appendix G).*

One more interesting point arose when dealing with a standards-driven portfolio – looking at the portfolio competencies from the perspective of what they do not contain. This topic surfaced during the focus group session when Anne pointed out that many things are actually omitted from the portfolio competencies that have helped make her a good teacher, including her experiences as a youth minister. [As set forth in our university's *Teacher Education Handbook*, pre-service teachers here are required to fulfill competencies with artifacts that come directly from their education classes]. Referring to the hands-on experiences and interaction of being a youth minister, she states,

- *... there's [sic] so many things that I feel like would be so much of a **better representation** of what kind of teacher I'm going to be that I can't put in there because **they [the artifacts that would come from her job as a youth minister] don't fit** anywhere (Appendix G).*

Again, looking at the underlined words and phrases for attitudes/evaluations – “I hate it,” “frustrated,” “completely asinine,” “drives me insane” – the focus group statements echoed those mentioned in the pre-service teacher PAQ: the pre-service teachers have concerns about the portfolio competencies, including the ambiguity of the wording, the prescriptive nature of writing to different professors' directives, and the prescriptive nature of writing to a specific competency/standard. Delving deeper into the prescriptive nature of the portfolio, focus group member Jenny stated that our portfolio is so prescriptive that it is like “teaching to a test.” Additionally, focus group members

admitted to “making up” artifacts to fulfill the competencies. Has the prescription inherent in Oklahoma’s mandated portfolio turned the entire process into nothing more than a massive standardized test, a mandated “lie” required to enter a profession that in principle revolves around honesty, integrity, knowledge construction and personal growth? Again, returning to Perloff’s (1993) definition of attitude, just how do the pre-service teachers’ evaluations of the portfolio’s competencies influence how they think and act? In this case, the pre-service teachers lie, creating bogus artifacts, and even cheat in conjunction with the professors who, essentially, “teach to the test.” How can the portfolio be educative if the pre-service teachers manufacture documents or cheat with the professors’ “help” in order to place artifacts into their portfolios?

The Portfolio’s Educative Meaning and Value

Like the pre-service teachers indicated in the PAQ, the focus group members doubted the portfolio’s role as a means to promote their growth and viewed it as a high-stakes endeavor with little meaning and value. One of the participants realized the high-stakes nature of the portfolio at our university, while the other members discussed changing majors because of the portfolio. Because the portfolio is a time-consuming, high stakes endeavor, the high pressure associated with the portfolio was a point of contention. Dustin succinctly stated the effect of the high pressure process by exclaiming that without the completion of a portfolio at our university,

- *You won’t graduate!*²⁸ (Appendix G)

²⁸ Note how this statement ties back to the gate-keeping nature of the portfolio that arose in the PAQ analysis.

Similar to the pre-service teacher PAQ statements, the focus group members also discussed the portfolio's educative meaning and value for future teachers. During the focus group session, Dustin admitted,

- *It's almost to the point to where I want to **drop my teaching certificate** – education – and just get a degree in something else..." (Appendix G).*

Katie added,

- *[I have heard] a lot of people say that...just **because of the portfolio** they're **changing their majors** and stuff (Appendix G).*

Jill admitted to almost doing so, and Jenny said that a classmate had told her recently,

- *'Yeah, I'm getting a health and physical education major, but it's not teaching.'* I'm like, 'What are you thinking?' He's like, 'I just **didn't want to do the portfolio,**' and he goes, 'It's way **too much time**. And it's way **too much work**. And it **doesn't accomplish anything**' (Appendix G).

Finally, Anne assuredly stated,

- *If I could have had it to do over again, I would have **graduated last year** and got **alternatively certified**, if I'd have known what I know now. I would not have **wasted this year** (Appendix G).*

Returning to Perloff's (1993) definition of "attitude," pre-service teachers' thoughts and actions concerning the portfolio's meaning and value are directed by their attitudes/evaluations of the portfolio. In fact, pre-service teachers evaluate the portfolio experience as having so little educational value that they communicate their evaluations to others so that some pre-service teachers choose alternate majors or even alternative certification routes. Thus, the original intent of the portfolio must be reexamined. Does

the Oklahoma portfolio for pre-service teachers help the preparers grow educationally? Does the process itself have meaning and value for the pre-service teachers? Those mandating the portfolio must look closely at what this attitudinal study reveals about the educative meaning and value of the portfolio, in order to ascertain if the portfolio process itself “meets expectations” for fulfilling the purpose its mandators have identified.

The “Benefits” of the Portfolio²⁹

The focus group participants’ responses to questions seven and eight³⁰ moved beyond the responses concerning the portfolio’s meaning and value. These responses fit into what I call the “benefits” of the portfolio, for in responding to questions seven and eight, the focus group members displayed much confusion about what they were (or were not) gaining by completing a portfolio. Does completing a portfolio benefit the pre-service teachers? I again return to the purpose for the portfolio mandate the members of the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation explain on their website:

The institution requires all initial and advanced certification candidates to develop a portfolio which documents a candidate’s accomplishments, learning, and strengths related to the competencies, standards, and outcomes established by the Commission, State Regents, SDE [State Department of Education] and institution (Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, Accreditation). Examining the language from the Commission’s stated purpose of the portfolio – “candidate’s

²⁹ Please note that for the focus group analysis, I added this category since it addresses focus group questions 7 and 8.

³⁰ Questions 7 and 8 are as follows: “Will the compilation of the portfolio make you a better teacher?” “Do you think that a poor portfolio is indicative of a poor teacher?”

accomplishments,” “learning,” “strengths,” and “competencies, standards and outcomes” – assists in understanding the unwritten assumption that the pre-service teachers might grow educationally and be better prepared to enter the teaching profession by creating a portfolio. When I asked the focus group members if the completion of a portfolio would make them better teachers, without hesitation, the entire group shouted a resounding,

- “No!” (*Appendix G*)

After focus group discussion concerning the traits of a “good” teacher, specific discussion arose concerning the development of a discipline plan. Anne eloquently added,

- *No amount of paper and reflection is going to give you [classroom] control (Appendix G).*

Then Dustin laughingly asked me,

- *Did you have to complete a portfolio to become a parent? (Appendix G)*

On a more serious note, Katie added,

- *I don’t see any possible way that it [the portfolio] can make me a better teacher – at all – or how it could affect my teaching, positively or negatively (Appendix G).*

I also asked the focus group if the completion of a poor portfolio would be indicative of a poor teacher. Anne admitted,

- *Just being honest – I don’t put my best work into the silly thing because I know I’m never going to use it again. So it’s not a good reflection of me...” (Appendix G).*

Summarizing what makes a “good teacher,” Dustin added,

- *...if an instructor asks you the question, ‘What makes you a **good teacher**? How do you evaluate a teacher?’ I guarantee you one of their first three answers is not going to be our portfolio. It’s going to be your students’ accomplishments – you know – how you felt at the end of the day... (Appendix G)*

Analyzing the above statements for attitudes/evaluations – “affect my teaching,” “silly thing,” “not going to be our portfolio” – I contend that the focus group members have reservations about the portfolio’s utility in their teacher education process and ultimately its benefit to their future teaching careers. Additionally, the pre-service teachers’ attitudes/evaluations are far different from the terms used in the Oklahoma Commission’s purpose for implementing the portfolio: “accomplishments,” “learning,” “strengths,” and “competencies, standards and outcomes.” Pre-service teachers clearly disagree that the portfolio assists them in a positive way and have doubts about the purpose and educational benefits of the portfolio.

Discussion of the Data Analysis

Analysis of the focus group data confirmed many of my findings concerning attitudes/evaluations of the portfolio from the pre-service teacher PAQ analysis: the frustration toward the issue of time; the concerns about the issue of reflection; the confusion associated with the competencies; and the many questions surrounding the meaning and value of the portfolio. These findings were not surprising since I created most of the questions for the focus group based on the categories from the PAQ analysis.

I will clarify how the focus group data aligned or failed to align with the research and the instructor PAQ data in the following discussion of the focus group data analysis.

First, the focus group data did not necessarily align with the research in the category of time involved in portfolio preparation. Although many experts discuss time in implementation as a disadvantage of portfolio use (Valencia and Calfee, 1991; Shulman 1998; Airasian, 2000; McMillin, 2001), none that I discovered addressed the issue of redundancy which was so prevalent in PAQ and focus group responses. In the instructor PAQ, the professors addressed the time issues associated with the grading of the portfolios, the time spent on portfolios during class, and time as it affects the pre-service teachers. However, as was absent from the research, the instructors did not mention the redundancy of the portfolio. On the other hand, the focus group confirmed the sentiments from the pre-service teacher PAQ: the focus group maintained that the portfolio was a time-consuming project that was often repetitious and, therefore, without meaning and value. Overall, the issue of time appears to be of great concern to those involved in any phase of portfolio implementation.

Second, researchers often cite reflection as a benefit of portfolio use (Wyatt and Looper, 1999; McMillin, 2001; Porter & Cleland, 1995). However, at my university – likely because of the “prescribed” reflection that accompanies a mandated portfolio – most of the pre-service teachers (as indicated in the pre-service teacher PAQ and in the focus group session) expressed frustration toward the portfolio reflections. They further indicated that “reflecting” at my university is not really reflection at all, thus confirming the PAQ findings. If the pre-service teachers are receiving mixed or no instruction concerning reflection, and if reflection at my university really is not reflection at all, how

can the pre-service teachers ultimately see the advantage of a process that is not taught to them and is distorted when implemented as a mandate?

Next, concerning the competencies, the focus group confirmed what some researchers (Taylor and Nolen, 2005; Herman and Winters, 1994; Popham, 2002) warn against – using the portfolio as an instrument with a mandated set of guidelines. On the other hand, in the instructor PAQ, the professors revealed mixed attitudes/evaluations toward the competencies – some of them claimed that basing instruction on competencies was helpful, while others maintained that the competencies cause confusion. Further, the focus group members confirmed two issues that arose in the pre-service teacher PAQ analysis: first, they viewed the wording of the competencies as vague and confusing; and, second, the focus group maintained that the prescriptive nature of a portfolio guided by competencies/standards sends confusing signals to the preparers: the portfolio is an “individualized” instrument, but you must complete it according to a set of standards.

A final issue the focus group members confirmed is the high pressure imposed on the pre-service teachers because of the high-stakes nature of the portfolio. Although research often supports portfolio compilation and claims that the portfolio can be a helpful tool, in their PAQ, the instructors maintained that trying to help implement and analyze the portfolios, while making sure their university achieves accreditation, is a stressful process. Likewise, the focus group members confirmed what I found in the pre-service teacher PAQ analysis – the portfolio is a high-stakes endeavor with the potential of keeping pre-service teachers from earning certification and licensure; thus, it causes

undue anxiety, pressure, and stress.³¹ The focus group members confirmed that at my university the portfolio causes high stress, and several of the pre-service teachers even admitted to considering a change in major because of the portfolio.

A new area of concern arose from the focus group discussion concerning the potential benefits of the portfolio. This conversation stemmed from questions seven and eight: “Will completion of the portfolio make you a better teacher?” And “Do you think that a poor portfolio is indicative of a poor teacher?” The focus group members adamantly stated that the portfolio would not help them become more effective teachers. Further, they maintained that the portfolio had bearing neither on their ability to grow educationally nor to become “good” teachers; therefore, they expressed frustration and confusion concerning the benefits of portfolio implementation and fail to see the portfolio as supporting their growth process.

Overall, I found the focus group session to corroborate the data from the pre-service teacher PAQ, as well as parts of the data from the instructor PAQ and from the literature: many powerful and emotive attitudes/evaluations toward the mandated portfolio exist among the instructors and pre-service teachers at my university. Returning again to Perloff’s (1993) definition of “attitude,” one must wonder how these compelling evaluations towards my university’s portfolio influence and/or direct the thoughts and actions of those carrying out the state’s mandate. Further, if the prevailing evaluation of the portfolio is one of frustration and even “hate,” then how does this evaluation influence or even direct how the instructors and pre-service teachers perceive and evaluate growth as valuable to constructing their teacher-selves? How does it influence

³¹ Some would argue that discomfort in an educational setting is not always a detrimental thing. However, when connected to a high-stakes instrument that can bar a person attaining his or her educational and, ultimately, career goals, then the anxiety, pressure and stress are indeed harmful.

their evaluation of education itself? At my university, completing a portfolio does influence the pre-service teachers' thoughts and actions: some pre-service teachers claimed they "made up" artifacts for the portfolio, essentially cheating along with the instructors who helped them create the documents; and some even leave the program or seek alternative certification to avoid the portfolio process.

CHAPTER VI

Findings, Implications, and Recommendations

“...the reason why we have to keep going back and doing things over is so the education program will look good. And it has nothing to do with our ability to teach” (Appendix H).

Religion scholar and author, George R. Knight (1998), accuses today’s American education system of being “mindless.” He contends that educators have for too long forgotten to “ask the larger questions of purpose” and that they are often “concerned more with motion than progress, with means than ends” (p. 2). The data analyses in the previous two chapters revealed much ambiguity concerning the purpose behind the Oklahoma mandate of the pre-service teacher portfolio and also revealed much uncertainty concerning the “means” and “ends” of completing the portfolio at my university. Therefore, what is the larger question of purpose surrounding portfolio implementation? Is the mandated portfolio another example of the mindless “bandwagon” approach to dealing with accreditation issues at the post-secondary level, “dumbing down” the curriculum and, in essence, teaching to a test? More specifically, does the mandated portfolio support the growth of pre-service teachers at my university and at other state universities?

What started out as a study focusing on instructor and pre-service teacher attitudes/evaluations towards the mandated teacher education portfolio grew into

something much larger than a simple glance into participants' views of the instrument. Using Perloff's (1993) definition, I analyzed the instructors' and pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations in the PAQ's and in the focus group to discover their "learned, enduring and global" evaluations toward the portfolio and to discover if these attitudes/evaluations influence/direct how the participants think and act in relation to the portfolio. I found that the instructors' and pre-service teachers' comments of frustration and discontent concerning the portfolio at my university are more than mere whimsical complaints, but, in accord with Perloff's (1993) definition, actual evaluations of the many facets of the portfolio process. Indeed, my analysis revealed that the attitudes/evaluations toward the portfolio are deep-rooted and also reflect Perloff's (1993) definition of attitude: the instructors and pre-service teachers learn the attitudes/evaluations through conversation with colleagues and peers already familiar with the process and through their own experiences with the portfolio; the attitudes/evaluations appear to be enduring; and the attitudes/evaluations do affect how those creating the portfolio think and act in relation to it.

Reexamining the focus group discussion data carefully, I discovered several in-depth findings that I had not realized before the focus group meeting. Studying the following findings will help determine if the mandated portfolio is truly an instrument that assists in pre-service teachers' growth: the pre-service teachers' blocked access to knowledge; the prescriptive nature of the portfolio at my university, and the high stakes (gate keeping) nature of the portfolio. I maintain that I discovered these findings through the focus group session because, in the casual atmosphere, the focus group members knew they could converse freely and share their thoughts through relaxed conversation.

Returning to the PAQ data with closer scrutiny, I was able to identify these findings in PAQ responses as well. In this chapter I will detail the findings emerging from my data analysis. Then, I will examine my findings using John Dewey's concept of education as growth as my theoretical lens. Finally, I discuss the implications of my research, making recommendations for future portfolio implementation.

Findings

I will examine my findings through the lens of John Dewey and his description of education as growth, for John Dewey (1944) contends that education should be a continuing growth process:

Since life means growth, a living creature lives as truly and positively at one stage as at another, with the same intrinsic fullness and the same absolute claims. Hence education means the enterprise of supplying the conditions which insure [sic] growth, or adequacy of life, irrespective of age (p. 51).

I maintain that it is up to educators at all levels to guarantee these conditions for growth. Examining the findings that emerged through my attitudinal study calls into question the role the portfolio plays in pre-service teachers' growth. Just what meaning and value does the portfolio process hold for the pre-service teachers mandated to complete it for certification and licensure?

Blocked Access to Knowledge

I detected the finding – blocked access to knowledge – in the focus group session, and, upon re-examination, found it in the PAQ data as well. Many pre-service teachers at my university maintain that the portfolio actually inhibits their learning instead of helping it. Although concern about pre-service teachers’ access to knowledge arose in several areas of the category of “time,” even in the instructor PAQ, several of the professors questioned the amount of time that the portfolio process consumed, thus potentially pulling pre-service teachers away from other learning activities, making such statements as: “It [the portfolio] takes up class time that could be used for better topics,” and “. . . I would like to see students [pre-service teachers] spending time on more practical experience and less on paper work (Appendix I). Many of the instructors apparently see that the pre-service teachers’ time is consumed with portfolio preparation activities that block them from other learning activities.

The pre-service teachers agreed with this stance and also sensed that their access to knowledge was being barred by the time and work spent in portfolio preparation, using phrases such as “waste of valuable time” and “just busywork.” A focus group student revealed, “. . . it seems like now all the education classes are centered around the portfolio. The teachers try to adapt what they’re doing in class to put in your portfolio. But whenever it takes over the whole class and the whole class is just to fulfill your portfolio assignments – I think it’s a bunch of bull. . .” (Appendix G). In the PAQ one pre-service teacher explained, “Instead of worrying about other important issues in my education, I am forced to work on something that will not even be used after my

graduation” (Appendix H). No doubt many of the pre-service teachers are concerned with the amount of class time spent in portfolio implementation.

The pre-service teachers also expressed frustration with the repetition of work that accompanies portfolio completion, preventing them from other educational activities and thus becoming a poor use of their time and efforts. In the focus group, one student explained, “. . .it seemed like we would create something for the classroom then have to go back and recreate the same thing to put in our portfolio. It seemed really redundant to me. . .” (Appendix G). Another focus group member concurred, “. . . whenever it [the portfolio] takes over the whole class and the whole class is just to fulfill your portfolio assignments – I think it’s a bunch of bull. . . I want to be taught what’s going to make me a better teacher, not what looks good on paper. . .” (Appendix G). In the PAQ pre-service teachers made comments such as, “I think the process is needless and redundant. . .” and “. . . all a portfolio is is stuff you have already done and you have to go back and do it again” (Appendix H). Again, the pre-service teachers realize their access to knowledge is being blocked because my university places so much emphasis on the portfolio that the constant repetition of work keeps them from completing other education-related tasks.

Is the expansive, high-stakes “thing” the portfolio has become at my university actually barring the pre-service teachers’ access to knowledge? If so, then the meaning and value of this finding must be considered. Students enter a university to learn content, skills, and dispositions that will help them grow educationally. What happens, then, if those desiring to be teachers do not learn what they need to learn for their futures in the teaching profession? After all, the university experience should be a growth experience even if the pre-service teachers do not realize it when they enter. For long term, if a pre-

service teacher is blocked from accessing knowledge while enrolled in a college teacher education program, what kind of teachers will these future educators be? Additionally, what will be the result if the pre-service teachers have not had access to the necessary knowledge and if they emulate our miseducative portfolio process as a methodology for their own teaching practices? If the portfolio truly blocks learning, then it appears to be an instrument that does not support growth; it is indeed miseducative.

The Prescriptive Nature of the Portfolio

While examining the participants' language in the data, I also became concerned about another recurrent finding closely related to pre-service teachers' blocked access to knowledge: the prescriptive nature of the portfolio at my university. This finding first appeared in the category of "reflection" but later surfaced in the categories of "competencies" and "the portfolio mandate." In the pre-service teacher PAQ data, many pre-service teachers indicated they were being forced to write reflections that were not their own thoughts, but the thoughts of others, namely the professors and the "state" through the competencies. The focus group session revealed the most insightful thoughts concerning the prescriptive nature of the reflection writing, with one participant stating directly, ". . . they [the professors] seem to have to mandate your thoughts even" (Appendix G). Returning to PAQ, one pre-service teacher stated, "I understand that it is very important to reflect on my actions taken, but I never seem to put down what my advisor is wanting" (Appendix H). A similar idea also arose in the analysis of the portfolio as a mandated evaluation tool, as several pre-service teachers indicated that the

portfolio really did not reflect their true work because they were having to write to standards or competencies. One pre-service teacher commented, “If we have to do it, let it be what we want, not what the education department wants us to say!” (Appendix H). Another went as far as calling the portfolio process at my university, “teaching to a test” (Appendix H).

Again, the meaning of the portfolio’s prescriptive nature is significant: when creating the portfolio, are pre-service teachers being “told” what to think? Returning to the research concerning the individuality supposedly occurring with portfolio creation, does our portfolio process actually stifle pre-service teacher input by “dictating” their thoughts? What are the pre-service teachers gaining from a portfolio that is so prescriptive in nature? It appears that my university’s portfolio actually impedes or blocks access to learning by forcing everyone, regardless of “shape,” to fit into one kind of “hole,” promoting sameness rather than individuality. Once more, I have to question the meaning and value of such an instrument – how can it support growth if it squelches the pre-service teachers’ input and ideas? What will the pre-service teachers recall about the teacher education program and mandated portfolio connected to that program in their educational journeys, and how will it affect their own teaching practices?

The High Stakes Nature of the Portfolio

While some of the professors in the instructor PAQ expressed hope that the portfolio would help the pre-service teachers in the long run, others pointed out that the portfolio process at our university is a pressure-filled endeavor that has become a “hoop”

through which the pre-service teachers must jump. It is indeed a high-stakes gate-keeping mechanism.³² In the PAQ the pre-service teachers made comments such as, “I don’t feel we should live or die by them [the portfolios]” and “It [the portfolio] places a great deal of stress on me” (Appendix H). The pre-service teachers clearly expressed dismay at the great amount of pressure the instructors and the state place on them to complete the portfolio, which leads to a different kind of high stakes: does the portfolio keep potential teachers out of the education field? My attitude analysis revealed that pre-service teachers (and potential pre-service teachers) view the portfolio as a high-stakes instrument and therefore definitely think and act in relation to their attitudes/evaluations concerning these high stakes: respondents in the pre-service teacher PAQ warned that many of their peers were dropping the education program at our university solely because of the portfolio, and one pre-service teacher even admitted to dropping the program herself. Additionally, after discussion of former pre-service teachers’ changing majors because of the portfolio, a focus group respondent admitted, “If I could have had it to do over again, I would have graduated last year and got alternatively certified, if I’d have known what I know now. I would not have wasted this year” (Appendix G).

Drawing from the other two findings and the effect of attitudes/evaluations on pre-service teachers’ thoughts and actions, I have to question if the portfolio – an evaluative instrument that supposedly helps create competent future teachers – is, in fact, blocking these future teachers’ learning through its prescriptive and high-stakes nature, keeping some potential teachers out of the field altogether, or perhaps causing them to seek alternative certification? Many pre-service teachers express much frustration and

³² Recall the chart in Chapter 1 that relays the benchmarks, benchmark requirements, evaluations, and consequences of failing the benchmark.

even hostility because of the high pressure placed on portfolio completion through the Oklahoma mandate and carried out at my university. What message, then, does this high-stakes instrument send to these future educators? Would it not be ironic if the only way pre-service teachers believed they could grow educationally, realizing “present possibilities, and thus make individuals better fitted to cope with later requirements” (Dewey 1944, p. 56), to be through the alternative certification route?

The Portfolio Viewed Through Dewey’s Concept of Education as Growth

Using John Dewey’s notion of education as growth as a lens incited some thought-provoking questions when considering my findings. Concerning pre-service teachers’ blocked access to knowledge, are pre-service teachers learning all they possibly can through our education program, or is the implementation of the portfolio blocking or reducing the quantity and depth of this learning? Examining John Dewey’s (1944) definition of education, one finds that education’s ultimate purpose is to help students grow. Dewey contends that “. . . the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education – or that the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth” (p. 100). Has the education department at my university forgotten its educational goals and turned the portfolio into an instrument that, instead of establishing conditions for growth, is actually impeding pre-service teachers’ capacities to grow? It is interesting to consider just what may be impeding or deterring this capacity for growth. Perhaps the related finding – the prescriptive nature of the portfolio – will give further insight.

Reading the prescriptive nature of our portfolio through John Dewey's (1944) concept of education as growth reveals that independent thinking is a condition to growth. In fact, Dewey states that, in order to grow and create knowledge as a means to more knowledge rather than an end in itself, students must be permitted to think for themselves with guidance from their instructors:

'Knowledge,' in the sense of information, means the working capital, the indispensable resources, of further inquiry; of finding out, or learning, more things. Frequently it is treated as an end itself, and then the goal becomes to heap it up and display it when called for. This static, cold-storage ideal of knowledge is inimical to educative development. It not only lets occasions for thinking go unused, but it swamps thinking (p. 158).

Dewey, in essence, distinguishes true knowledge from the "piling up" of knowledge that prevents and even blocks thinking. Pre-service teachers "heap up" artifacts and "reflections" when preparing their portfolios; therefore, is the mandated portfolio indeed this "static, cold-storage" of information? Further, does the portfolio "swamp" the pre-service teachers' thoughts by "heaping up" information instead of allowing inquiry into the information? Dewey would answer, "yes," stating that students "who have stored their 'minds' with all kinds of material which they have never put to intellectual uses are sure to be hampered when they try to think" (p. 158). Indeed, the pre-service teachers at my university maintain that the portfolio is much like a "cold storage" of information that, according to Dewey, swamps thinking. Recall one pre-service teacher's statement: "Let's judge teacher candidates [pre-service teachers] on their

teaching abilities and not as much on their ability to organize and create documents for a portfolio that honestly has no real weight. . .” (Appendix H).

Contemporary scholar Andy Hargreaves latches upon this Deweyan idea of “heaping up” work creating a theory he calls intensification, a concept drawn from general theories of the labor process. Among several points Hargreaves (1992) claims about the intensification theory, the following relate directly to the pre-service teacher portfolio: 1). Intensification leads to lack of time to retool one’s skills and keep up with one’s field; 2). Intensification creates chronic and persistent overload (as compared with the temporary overload that is sometimes experienced in meeting deadlines), which reduces areas of personal discretion, inhibits involvement in and control over longer-term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise; 3). Intensification leads to reductions in the quality of service, as corners are cut to save time; and 4). Intensification leads to enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which can in turn create excessive dependency on outside expertise and further reductions in the quality of service (pp. 88-89).

Hargreaves (1992) maintains that intensification is an increasingly problematic issue in the education arena and describes the impact of the intensification thesis in education: “[the teachers’] work has become increasingly *intensified*, with teachers expected to respond to greater pressures and to comply with multiplying innovations under conditions that are at best stable and at worst deteriorating” (p. 88). Finn and Kanstoroom (2000) seem to uphold the intensification theory specifically in the teacher education field, and they contend that most states are simply piling on more requirements

for teacher certification, “tightening the regulatory vise” (p. 1) while still failing to assure quality future educators. Additionally, Finn and Kanstoroom (2000) point out that many potential educators are avoiding the teaching profession because of its “frustrating certification process” (p. 1). My research suggests that the portfolio at my university does, in fact, intensify the work for both the pre-service teachers and instructors leading to many of the situations listed above, including reduced time for general preparation, persistent overload, and reduction in quality of work. Hargreave’s intensification thesis indeed manifests itself in my university’s mandated portfolio by adding one more needless step to an already complicated certification process by heaping up steps within the portfolio that swamp pre-service teachers’ thinking that, it seems, inhibit their growth.

Looking at what my attitude analysis revealed about the high-stakes nature of the portfolio through John Dewey’s (1944) definition of education as growth, one must again question the mandated portfolio’s educational value. Dewey maintains that growth in education should be a continuous process, not just something that is completed in “odd moments” (p. 56):

Because the need of preparation for a continually developing life is great, it is imperative that every energy should be bent to making the present experience as rich and significant as possible. Then as the present merges insensibly into the future, the future is taken care of (p. 56).

My university’s teacher education portfolio reflects an “odd moment,” a moment sterile rather than growth enhancing. My data does not reflect that pre-service teachers at my university (and even many of the professors) view the portfolio as a “rich” and “significant” experience that positions them to take care of the future as the present

merges into it insensibly. Instead, the portfolio is “a really nice doorstep” and a “waste of time.”

Implications

A serious look at the portfolio mandate is in order. Many experts warn against the current wide-scale use one sees in Oklahoma. For instance, Popham (2002) states,

It is one thing to use portfolios for classroom assessment; it is quite another to use portfolios for large-scale assessment programs. Several states and large school districts have attempted to install portfolios as a central component of a large-scale accountability assessment program – that is, a program in which student performances serve as an indicator of an educational system’s effectiveness. To date, the results of efforts to employ portfolios for accountability purposes have not been encouraging (p. 202).

Hand in hand with this concern, numerous questions concerning the “true” purpose of the portfolio are also prevalent at my university. If the real purpose is to evaluate the program, not the individual pre-service teachers, then does the portfolio serve as an instrument supporting the growth of the pre-service teachers? Professors and pre-service teachers alike express frustration toward portfolio completion and seem confused by the multiple purposes of the portfolio as set forth in our *Teacher Education Handbook*. Note my university’s “purposes” in bold-faced type:

Candidates should consider this portfolio as an evolving display of **professional growth** during Benchmarks 1-3. The final portfolio, Benchmark 4, illustrates a

teacher candidate's **best work**. The portfolio is also **required for institutional accreditation** by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation (OCTP) as a continuous assessment tool of programs, standards, outcomes and quality experiences that [my university] provides for our candidates (*Teacher Education Handbook*).

Again, researchers warn against such multiple uses. Recalling the three models of portfolios, Popham (2002) answers the question, can a portfolio perform all three functions at the same time: "My answer is a somewhat shaky *yes*. But if you were to ask me whether one portfolio can perform all three functions *well*, you'd get a rock-solid *no*. The three functions, though related – somewhat like second cousins – are fundamentally different" (p. 206). Given his answer, Popham would definitely view my university's portfolio as having little meaning or value in terms of pre-service teacher growth.

Examining the portfolio's multiple foci at my university reveals the portfolio to be a complex instrument whose ambiguous purposes and uses fail to support the growth of many of the pre-service teachers. Returning to Perloff's (1993) definition, the attitudes/evaluations discovered in my attitude analysis undoubtedly influence how those implementing the portfolio think and act toward it, creating the proverbial "vicious cycle." Does the overall attitude/evaluation of the portfolio stem from the complexity of the process, or do instructors and pre-service teachers "learn" to despise the portfolio before they even begin dealing with it due to the hearsay and "clamor" that already exists at my university?

Indeed, my research fills a gap in the existing literature that supports portfolio use. It is interesting to recall my original research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of pre-service teachers at [my university] toward the mandated portfolio?
2. What are the attitudes of teacher educators at [my university] toward the mandated portfolio?
3. How have the portfolios been beneficial to the pre-service teachers' teacher education preparation?
4. What causes the most frustration for pre-service teachers and teacher educators in the portfolio compilation process?
5. What do the pre-service teachers and teacher educators foresee as the usefulness of their portfolios after graduation?
6. What are possible suggestions the pre-service teachers and teacher educators might make to improve the portfolio process?

Using these questions as a basis, I found that the pre-service teachers' attitudes/evaluations definitely affect how they think and act towards creating their portfolios, possibly prompting some to "cheat" or "lie" about their artifacts and even directing them out of the program and sometimes out of teaching. No doubt this attitude/evaluation will affect how they see the portfolio as an instrument for their growth. How will the completion of such an instrument, then, affect the pre-service teachers' overall view of education? More specifically, will this view affect how these pre-service teachers evaluate their own students in their future classrooms?

Additionally, in contrast to research supporting portfolios, while cautioning against their wide-scale use, my state and my university implement their use on a wide scale basis, reflecting the very problems researchers anticipate. Did Oklahoma research

portfolios and use what they learned to establish a philosophical foundation and scaffolding for our state's education portfolio? Did any Oklahoma university (or universities) ever pilot the portfolio before the state mandated it for each teacher education program? Confusion seems to surround the entire teacher education process in our state. Recalling that Dewey (1944) makes a marked distinction among "educating," "training," and "preparing," has our state dealt with these distinctions? Even the name of our governing board – the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation – implies that "preparing" teachers is what our state values. Preparing for what, one might ask, since, according to Dewey, "preparation" fails to emphasize the importance of the present. Does anyone truly value teacher education, a process which is completed with thoughts, actions and emotions? Many of the instructors and pre-service teachers implementing the portfolio would answer a resounding, "no." Oklahoma mandators apparently failed to examine the many repercussions that arise when mandating a standards-based instrument on such a wide-scale basis. Therefore, the findings of my study are generalizable across the state, since the mandate affects each Oklahoma university's teacher education program.

Recommendations

If the state of Oklahoma continues the pre-service teacher portfolio mandate in its present form, then the education department at my university must make some drastic changes to its portfolio creation process. First, the addition of more faculty members will be essential for more effective, and less work intensive, portfolio implementation. Portfolio research supports strong mentoring relationships (McMillin, 2001; Porter &

Cleland, 1995; Tierney et al. 1991), and these relationships simply do not occur at my university because of the time issues involved; the portfolio is just too much work to be completed by disproportionate ratios of pre-service teachers to professors. Second, the portfolio must not be so prescriptive. Not allowing pre-service teachers to achieve the competencies and respond to them in an individual way makes the portfolio nothing more than a “very, very cumbersome multiple choice test” (Shulman, 1998, p. 35), a heaping up of information and a means of stunting growth. Finally, instructors should avoid implementing the portfolio only as a ‘gate’ through which pre-service teachers must pass to earn certification and to graduate. If the pre-service teachers are going to be mandated to complete a portfolio, then they must see it as – and it must be – an instrument of growth, instead of a high-stakes assignment which drastically increases their workloads.

I maintain that the portfolio phenomenon, at least at my university, has become overwhelming. Therefore, I suggest that governing agencies use a more efficient means of evaluating pre-service teachers and programs. Oklahoma must begin by looking at what other states are doing to fulfill the same requirements for accreditation and for pre-service teacher evaluations. Whatever the state chooses must be something that has meaning and value for the pre-service teachers, something that truly contributes to their growth without adding unneeded “busy-work,” becoming a representation of a mental piling up of information that inhibits thinking. As Dewey (1944) states, “If education is growth, it must progressively realize present possibilities, and thus make individuals better fitted to cope with later requirements” (p. 56). If the teacher education portfolio is to contribute to the pre-service teachers’ growth, it must then help them “progressively

realize present possibilities” so that they are better fitted now and throughout their journeys “to cope with later requirements.”

Currently, according to the data taken from pre-service teachers at my university, the Oklahoma mandated portfolio does not promote pre-service teachers’ growth. Dewey’s concept of education as growth should be kept in mind when implementing future assignments or “mandates,” since the purpose of educating every pre-service teacher is to help them become the best educators they can be and not to stifle the thoughts and actions of these future teachers. Returning to Dewey’s (1944) words, and keeping in mind that my university’s pre-service teachers often do not desire to continue their teacher education because of the portfolio, we see that pre-service teachers will only want to learn if they see the learning will impact their futures: “The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact” (p. 53). As teacher educators, our daily goal should be to ensure that our pre-service teachers – our children’s future teachers – are in a continual growth process so that each day they spend with children they create the conditions for their own continuous growth and for their progressive realization of present possibilities, a realization that will make them “better fitted to cope with later requirements” (Dewey 1944, p. 56).

References

- Adams, T.L. (1995). A paradigm for portfolio assessment in teacher education. *Education, 115*(4), Summer, 568. Retrieved February 12, 2003, from ProQuest database.
- Airasian, P.W. (2000). *Assessment in the classroom: A concise approach*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Bushnell, M. (2003). Teachers in the schoolhouse panopticon: Complicity and resistance. *Education and Urban Society, 35*(3), 251-273.
- Campbell, D.M., Cignetti, P. B., Melenzyer, B.J., Nettles, D.H., & Wyman, R.M. (2001). *How to develop a professional portfolio: A manual for teachers*. Boston: Alyn & Bacon.
- Campbell, M.R. & Brummett, V.M. (2002). Professional teaching portfolios: For pros and preservice teachers alike. *Music educators' journal, 89*(2), November, 25-30+. Retrieved February 12, 2003, from ProQuest database.
- Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education*. New York: Free Press.
- Dewey, J. (1910) *How we think*. Boston: D.C. Heath and Company.
- Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M., & Anzul, M. (2001). *On writing qualitative research*. London: Routledge Falmer Press.
- Finn, C.E. & Kanstoroom, M. (2000). Improving, empowering, dismantling. The Public Interest. Issue #140. The National Affairs, Inc. Retrieved September 2004 from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0377/is_2000_Summer/ai_63856604/

- Freidus, H. (1998). Mentoring portfolio development. In Lyons, N., (Ed.) *With portfolio in hand*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 51-67.
- Gay, L.R. & Airasian, P. (2000). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Hargreaves, A. (1992). Time and Teachers' work: An analysis of the intensification thesis. *Teachers College Record*, 94 (1), 87 – 108.
- Herman, J. & Winters, L. (1994). Portfolio research: A slim collection. *Educational Leadership*, 52 (2), 48-55.
- Hini, D., Gendall, P. & Kearns, Z. (1995). The link between environmental attitudes and behaviour. *Marketing Bulletin*. Retrieved August 15, 2004, from http://marketing_bulletin.massey.ac.nz/article6/article3.asp
- Johnson, T. (2001). Controlling the effect of stimulus context change on attitude statements. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 53 (1), 23-29.
- Juska, J. (2001). What we write about when we write about love. In Smith, M.A. and Juska, J. (Eds.) *The whole story: Teachers talk about portfolios*. Berkeley, California: National Writing Project, pp. 79 – 88.
- Knight, G.R. (1998). *Issues and alternatives in educational philosophy*. Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press.
- Krause, S. (1996). Portfolios in teacher education: Effects of instruction on preservice teachers' early comprehension of the portfolio process. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 47 (2), Mar/Apr, 130. Retrieved February 12, 2003, from ProQuest database.

- Lincoln, Yvonna S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Lyons, N. (1998a). Introduction. In Lyons, N., (Ed.) *With portfolio in hand*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp 1 – 8.
- Lyons, N. (1998b). Portfolios and their consequences: Developing as a reflective practitioner. In Lyons, N., (Ed.) *With portfolio in hand*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 247 – 264.
- Lyons, N. (1998c). Portfolio possibilities: Validating a new teacher professionalism. In Lyons, N., (Ed.) *With portfolio in hand*. New York: Teachers College Press, pp. 11 – 22.
- McLaughlin, M. & Vogt, M. (1998). Portfolio assessment for inservice teachers: A collaborative model. In McLaughlin, M., (Ed.), *Professional portfolio models*. Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- McMillin, J.H. (2001). *Classroom assessment: Principles and practice for effective instruction*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Mertens, D.M. (1998). *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Mokhtari, K., Yellin, D., Bull, K., & Montgomery, D. (1996). Portfolio assessment in teacher education: Impact on preservice teachers' knowledge and attitudes. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 47 (4), Sep-Oct, 245-252. Retrieved February 12, 2003, from ProQuest database.

- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (1991). *What teachers should know and be able to do*. Washington, DC.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2003). Retrieved August 14, 2003, from <http://www.ncate.org>
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2002). *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*. Washington, D.C.
- Nitko, A. (2004). *Educational assessment of students*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation. (n.d.). Accreditation. Retrieved March 23, 2004, from <http://www.octp.org/staterep.html>
- Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation. (n.d.). Portfolio assessment. Retrieved March 23, 2004, from <http://www.octp.org/octp/portassess.html>
- Oklahoma State Department of Education. (n.d.). Resident teacher Program. Retrieved March 23, 2004, from <http://www.sde.state.ok.us/home/defaultie.html>
- Parsons, J. (1998). Portfolio assessment: Let us proceed with caution. *Adult Learning*, 9(4), Summer, 28-30. Retrieved February 21, 2003, from EBSCO Host database.
- Perloff, R.M. (1993). *The dynamics of persuasion: Communication and attitudes in the 21st century*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Popham, W.J. (2002). *Classroom assessment: What teachers need to know*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Porter, C. & Cleland, J. (1995). *The portfolio as a learning strategy*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.
- Pyron, H.C. (2001). *Employee attitude analysis: A "fast track" approach to organizational development and improving employee productivity*. Eugene, Oregon: Northwest Leadership Inc. Retrieved August 15, 2004, from www.nwleadership.com/docs/eas_fast_track.pdf
- Reis, N. & Villaume, S.K. (2002). The benefits, tensions, and visions of portfolios as a wide-scale assessment for teacher education. *Action in Teacher Education*, 23(4), Winter, 10-17.
- Robinson, M.A. (2001). *College students' attitudes toward portfolio assessment as an alternative to traditional tests*. Paper presented at the Academy of Business Education Conference in Bermuda.
- Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I.S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Ruhana, J. (2001). Portfolios that make a difference: A four-year journey. . In Smith, M.A. and Juska, J. (Eds.) *The whole story: Teachers talk about portfolios*. Berkeley, California: National Writing Project, pp. 35 - 50.
- Ryan, K. & Cooper, J.M. (2004). *Those who can, teach*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Salvia, J. & Ysseldyke, J.E. (2004). *Assessment in special and inclusive education*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Shulman, L.S. (1994, January). *Portfolios in historical perspective*. Presentation at the Portfolios in Teaching and Teacher Education Conference, Cambridge, MA.

- Shulman, L.S. (1998). Teacher portfolios: A theoretical activity. In McLaughlin, M., (Ed.), *Professional portfolio models*. Norwood, Massachusetts: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Shulman, L.S. (1988). A union of insufficiencies: Strategies for teacher assessment in a period of education reform. *Educational Leadership*, 46(3), 36-41.
- State Requirements. F:\USERS\Program Accreditation\State Requirements\State Requirements.doc.
- Stone, B.A. (1998). Problems, pitfalls, and benefits of portfolios. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 25 (1), 105-114.
- Swain, S. E. (2001). How portfolios empower process teaching and learning. In Smith, M.A. and Juska, J. (Eds.) *The whole story: Teachers talk about portfolios*. Berkeley, California: National Writing Project, pp. 9 – 21.
- Taylor, C.S. & Nolen, S.B. (2005). *Classroom assessment: Supporting teaching and learning in real classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Teacher Education Handbook*. (2002). My university. Oklahoma.
- Tierney, R., Carter, M. and Desai, L. (1991). *Portfolio assessment in the reading-writing classroom*. Norwood, Massachusetts: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Turner, Nancy D. (2002). The evolution of portfolios in teacher education. *Essays in education*, Fall, 1-7. Retrieved April 3, 2003, from http://www.columbiacollegesc.edu/essays/volume3_fall2003.html

- Valencia, S.W. & Calfee, R. (1991). The development and use of literacy portfolios for students, classes, and teachers. In *Applied measurement in education* (pp. 333-345). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Ward, A. & Murray-Ward, M. (1999). *Assessment in the classroom*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Wolf, D. (1998). Creating a portfolio culture. In Lyons, N., (Ed.) *With portfolio in hand*. New York and London: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Wolcott, H. (1995). *The art of fieldwork*. London: Altamira Press.
- Wyatt, R.L & Looper, S. (1999). *So you have to have a portfolio: A teacher's guide to preparation and presentation*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Appendix A

Oklahoma General Competencies for Teacher Licensure and Certification

1. The teacher understands the central concepts and methods of inquiry of the subject matter discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. The teacher understands how students learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and physical development at all grade levels including early childhood, elementary, middle level, and secondary.
3. The teacher understands that students vary in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adaptable to individual differences of learners.
4. The teacher understands curriculum integration processes and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills and effective use of technology.
5. The teacher uses best practices related to motivation and behavior to create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, self-motivation and active engagement learning, thus, providing opportunities for success.

6. The teacher develops knowledge of and uses communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The teacher plans instruction based upon curriculum goals, knowledge of the teaching/learning process, subject matter, students abilities and differences, and the community; and adapts instruction based upon assessment and reflection.
8. The teacher understands and uses a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate and modify the teaching/learning process ensuring the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.
9. The teacher evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parent, and other professionals in the learning community), modifies those actions when needed, and actively seeks opportunities for continued professional growth.
10. The teacher fosters positive interaction with school colleagues, parents/ families, and organizations in the community to actively engage them in support of student learning and well-being.
11. The teacher shall have an understanding of the importance of assisting students with career awareness and the application of career concepts to the academic curriculum.
12. The teacher understands the process of continuous lifelong learning, the concept of making learning enjoyable, and the need for a willingness to

change when the change leads to greater student learning and development.

13. The teacher understands the legal aspects of teaching including the rights of students and parents/families, as well as the legal rights and responsibilities of the teacher.
14. The teacher understands, and is able to develop instructional strategies/plans based on the Oklahoma core curriculum.
15. The teacher understands the State teacher evaluation process, "Oklahoma Criteria for Effective Teaching Performance," and how to incorporate these criteria in designing instructional strategies.

Appendix B

Competency Organization at the Author's University

Section I: Introduction (no competencies)

Section II – Students: Learners and the Learning Environment

1. The candidate understands how students learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and physical development at all grade levels, including early childhood, elementary, middle level, and secondary.
2. The candidate understands that students vary in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adaptable to individual differences of learners.
3. The candidate uses best practices related to motivation and behavior to create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, self-motivation, and active engagement in learning, thus providing opportunities for success.
4. The candidate understands the process of continuous lifelong learning, the concept of making learning enjoyable, and the need for willingness to change when the change leads to greater student learning and development.

Section III – Teaching: Instruction and Assessment

5. The candidate plans instruction based upon curriculum goals, knowledge of the teaching/learning process, subject matter, students' abilities and

differences, and the community, and adapts instruction based upon assessment and reflection.

- 5.1. The candidate understands and is able to develop instructional strategies/plans based on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum.
6. The candidate understands curriculum integration processes and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills and effective use of technology.
7. The candidate develops knowledge of and uses communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
8. The candidate understands and uses a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate and modify the teaching/learning process ensuring the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.
9. The candidate shall have an understanding of the importance of assisting students with career awareness and the application of career concepts to the academic curriculum.

Section IV – Schools: The Professional Environment

10. The candidate evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parent, and other professionals in the learning community), modifies those actions when needed, and actively seeks opportunities for continued professional growth.

11. The candidate understands the State teacher evaluation process, "Oklahoma Criteria for Effective Teaching Performance," and how to incorporate these criteria in designing instructional strategies.
12. The candidate fosters positive interaction with school colleagues, parents/families, and organizations in the community to actively engage them in support of student learning and well-being.
13. The candidate understands the legal aspects of teaching including the rights of students and parents/families, as well as the legal rights and responsibilities of the teacher.
14. The candidate researches and analyzes major contemporary problems in public education.

Appendix C

Research Data Collection - Questionnaire

ID# _____

Student Demographic Information

Instructions: Please place a check in the blanks that apply. *Please note that you may choose to not answer any or all of the following questions.*

Gender: _____ Male
 _____ Female

Age: _____ 17-24
 _____ 25 or more

Classification: _____ Freshman
 _____ Sophomore
 _____ Junior
 _____ Senior

Ethnicity: _____ Native American
 _____ African American
 _____ Latino/Hispanic
 _____ Caucasian
 _____ Other

Cumulative G.P.A.:
 _____ 3.5 – 4.0
 _____ 3.0 – 3.4
 _____ 2.5 – 2.9
 _____ Below 2.5

Major: _____ Elementary or Early Childhood Education
 _____ Secondary Education
 If secondary, please identify content area major:
 _____ English/Language Arts
 _____ Mathematics
 _____ Science
 _____ Social Sciences
 _____ Health/Physical Education
 _____ Business
 _____ Other

Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire – Student

Instructions: Please answer the following questions completely and thoughtfully. (Feel free to use the reverse side of this sheet if needed).

1. Describe your overall attitude toward the pre-service teaching portfolio at NWOSU.
2. How has the portfolio helped you in your teacher education preparation?
3. What, if anything, has caused frustration for you concerning your portfolio preparation?
4. How do you foresee using the portfolio after graduation?
5. Please list any suggestions you might have regarding the portfolio process at NWOSU.
6. Is there anything else you'd like to share concerning the portfolio process at NWOSU?

Instructor Demographic Information

Instructions: Please place a check in the blanks that apply. *Please note that you may choose to not answer any or all of the questions.*

Gender: _____ Male
 _____ Female

Age: _____ 24 – 34
 _____ 35 – 44
 _____ 45 – 54
 _____ 55 – above

Ethnicity: _____ Native American
 _____ African American
 _____ Latino/Hispanic
 _____ Caucasian
 _____ Other

Primary Area of Instruction:
 _____ Elementary/ Early Childhood Education
 _____ Secondary Education
 _____ English/Language Arts
 _____ Mathematics
 _____ Science
 _____ Social Sciences
 _____ Music
 _____ Health/Physical Education
 _____ Business
 _____ Other

Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire – Instructor

Instructions: Please answer the following questions completely and thoughtfully. (Feel free to use the reverse side of this sheet if needed).

1. Describe your overall attitude toward the pre-service teaching portfolio at NWOSU.
2. How has portfolio implementation affected your teaching methodologies?
3. What, if anything, has caused frustration for you concerning portfolio preparation?
4. How do you foresee the students using the portfolio after graduation?
5. Please list any suggestions you might have regarding the portfolio process at NWOSU.
6. Is there anything else you'd like to share concerning the portfolio process at NWOSU?

Appendix D

Research Questions – Focus Group

Guiding Questions for the Portfolio Attitude Focus Group

1. First, please go around the room and tell your major and year of expected graduation.
2. Please discuss the issues of time and cost associated with the creation of your portfolio.
3. Several in the original questionnaire mentioned the organization aspect of the portfolio. Please elaborate.
4. Many mentioned the term “reflection” when answering the original questionnaire. Please speak to the reflections that were a part of your portfolio.
5. Please discuss why you think the state of Oklahoma and NWOSU require the portfolio in the first place.
6. Please discuss the wording of the competencies themselves.
7. Will completion of the portfolio make you a better teacher?
8. Do you think that a poor portfolio is indicative of a poor teacher?
9. Is there anything further you would like to add concerning the portfolio preparation process?

Appendix E

Focus Group Participation Form

I _____ completed a Portfolio Attitude Questionnaire for Ms. Lisa Holder in the fall of 2003 and would be willing to participate in a focus group session to further discuss the portfolio with my classmates. I understand that, if chosen, I will meet with eight other participants to share my views of the portfolio. I also understand that the session will be audio taped but that pseudonyms will be used for the data collection and reporting process.

If I am chosen for the focus group, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Further, the date and time of _____ is suitable to my schedule, and I will be able to meet with the other members of the focus group at that time.

Appendix F
Consent Form for PAQ

"I, _____, hereby authorize or direct Lisa Holder to perform the following treatment or procedure."

Researcher Lisa Holder
Address P.O. Box 359, 716 Locust, Alva, Oklahoma 73717
Telephone Number 580-327-0731 (home) 580-327-8454 (work)
E-mail Address ldholder@nwsu.edu

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research activity. This form outlines the purposes of the research activity and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant. You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the research activity and the methods I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me; please contact me at any time at the address/phone number listed above.

Purpose:

This is done as a part of a dissertation investigation entitled, "Teacher Education Portfolios: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice." The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes toward the portfolio preparation process at Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU). As common themes emerge, they can be investigated in order to improve the portfolio process for all involved.

Procedure:

As part of this study, you will be asked to participate in the following:

1. You will be asked to answer basic demographic information about yourself.
2. You will be asked to complete a Portfolio Attitude Instrument. It will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Benefits:

This study will examine the attitudes of the mandated portfolio procedure of both pre-service teachers and the teacher education faculty. Results of this study can help teacher educators explore the themes (from both the student and teacher standpoints) that exist toward Oklahoma's mandated pre-service teaching portfolio at NWOSU. The end result could be a more meaningful portfolio experience for both teacher educators and future pre-service teachers, not only at NWOSU but at other Oklahoma universities as well.

Confidentiality:

You will be given a pseudonym to be used throughout the data collection process. This pseudonym will also be used in the dissemination of the results of the study. During the data collection process, only the principle investigator will have access to the data. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my office.

"I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director."

I may contact Lisa Holder (OSU Graduate Student and Assistant Professor at Northwestern Oklahoma State University) at 580-327-8454. I may also contact Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary, Oklahoma State University, 415 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; telephone number: (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _____ Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: _____
Signature of Subject

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Lisa Holder

Consent Form for Focus Group

"I, _____, hereby authorize or direct Lisa Holder to perform the following treatment or procedure."

Researcher Lisa Holder

Address P.O. Box 359, 716 Locust, Alva, Oklahoma 73717

Telephone Number 580-327-0731 (home) 580-327-8454 (work)

E-mail Address ldholder@nwsu.edu

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research activity. This form outlines the purposes of the research activity and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the research activity and the methods I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me; please contact me at any time at the address/phone number listed above.

Purpose:

This is done as a part of a dissertation investigation entitled, "Teacher Education Portfolios: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice." The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes toward the portfolio preparation process at Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU). As common themes emerge, they can be investigated in order to improve the portfolio process for all involved.

Procedure:

As part of this study, you will be asked to participate in the following:

1. You will participate in an hour-long focus group session, answering direct questions and discussing issues you wish to raise concerning the portfolio process at NWOSU.
2. You will be audio taped during this session with your permission. The tape will be destroyed within one calendar year, and pseudonyms will be used for all participants.

Benefits:

This study will examine the attitudes of the mandated portfolio procedure held by current pre-service teachers. Results of this study can help teacher educators explore the themes (from both the student and teacher standpoints) that exist toward Oklahoma's mandated pre-service teaching portfolio at NWOSU. The end result could be a more meaningful portfolio experience for both teacher educators and future pre-service teachers, not only at NWOSU but at other Oklahoma universities as well.

Confidentiality:

You will be given a pseudonym to be used throughout the data collection process. This pseudonym will also be used in the dissemination of the results of the study. During the data collection process, only the principle investigator will have access to the data. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my office.

If you grant permission for audio taping, no audiotapes will be used for any purpose other than to do this research activity and will not be played for any other reason. The audio tape will be destroyed within one calendar year.

"I understand that participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director."

I may contact Lisa Holder (OSU Graduate Student and Assistant Professor at Northwestern Oklahoma State University) at 580-327-8454. I may also contact Dr. Carol Olson, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; telephone number: (405) 744-1676; e-mail: colson@okstate.edu.

Do you grant permission to participate in this focus group research activity?

Yes _____ No _____

Do you grant permission to be audio taped?

Yes _____ No _____

Do you grant permission to be quoted directly (using a pseudonym)?

Yes _____ No _____

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _____ Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: _____

Signature of Subject

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it.

Signed: _____ Date _____

Lisa Holder

Appendix G

FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPT – Feb. 19, 2004 – 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Members:

Dustin – Health and Physical Ed. major k-12; elementary education

& a certificate in special ed.; graduate May 2005

Anne – Secondary Science major; graduate May 2004 (student
teaching)

Jenny – Health and Physical Ed. major; graduate December 2004

Katie – Elementary major; graduate May 2005

Jill – Elementary major; graduate May 2005

Discussion: Question #2 – tape 000

Lisa: How do you feel about the time and cost issues associated with the portfolio?

Anne: As far as the cost goes, I guess I just did it so gradually that I didn't even notice. I'd have to go back and really look at it to think about it – the paper and ink and all that other good stuff. Time – it was kind of frustrating - just for the simple fact that it seemed like we would create something for the classroom then have to go back and re-create the same thing to put in our portfolio. It seemed really redundant to me in a lot of ways, and I think that's what frustrated me most. I wouldn't mind if it took time to do if I felt like the time was valid.

Jenny: I agree with the time... you create it for the classroom then have to go re-create it. The cost really wasn't a big deal to me – I just went to Wal-Mart, threw everything in and picked it up one day, wasn't much to that. But it does take a lot of time.

Katie: I've only made it through Benchmark 2, so I guess I haven't spent a lot of time on it. But I foresee that it's going to take a lot of time probably, and I haven't really had a problem with cost either.

Jill: For me the time and the cost is pretty big, because I just started my portfolio in the fall, and I interviewed in the fall as well. And so it was just all once – having to spend all my time to do that

and all my money to do that. So for me the cost and everything was bad.

Dustin: On time, ummm, I haven't got a whole lot put into my portfolio yet. I have a good understanding of the portfolio and what it takes to do it. But as far as the time consideration goes. I want to say something real quick.

Lisa: Go for it.

Dustin: The classes – it seems like now all the education classes are centered around the portfolio. The teachers try to adapt what they're doing in class to put in your portfolio. But whenever it takes over the whole class and the whole class is just to fulfill your portfolio assignments – I think it's a bunch of bull because, you know, I want to be taught what's going to make me a better teacher, not what looks good on paper that no one's likely to look at anyways once you get out of college. Very time consuming.

Question #3 Tape - 075

Lisa: Another theme that kept coming up was that of 'organization.'

Talk just for a minute about the organization aspect of the portfolio.

Dustin: If you want to be that organized and put everything down on paper and evaluate somebody by their paperwork, then it's really organized – down to the last tab.

Anne: I guess I don't exactly. I don't know – it IS an organized way of putting things down – the portfolio in general... um... the ones

that we do – number one – the competencies themselves are so vague that it makes it hard to know exactly what you're supposed to be doing. Someone could read it, take it one way, put an artifact in there that would fit in the way that they're thinking. Someone else could take it a completely different way, put a different artifact in there and it, and it just depends on who's grading it at the end – as to whether they agreed with what you were thinking when you put it in there. It just seems very subjective to me. And number two, quite frankly, it's pretty easy to fake it. I don't think it's a very accurate measure of what we can actually do as teachers, considering that it all has to be done before we even teach. So I feel like that sort of invalidates the process in a way

Dustin: Really, you're evaluating someone's secretarial skills

(all students): yeah, right

Dustin: You know, it doesn't matter. I could have Joe Blow go put together a portfolio and fake it, and he might not even have the slightest idea of how to deal with students. And you have somebody who's not good at organizational paper work in that manner where it's dictated to them by someone, like Anne said, if someone doesn't agree, you know, if they don't think it fits in that certain competency and you thought it did, that's more than I can see, because now someone's got to back and fix it and bring it

before them again and hope – they’re just hoping it will fit this time – they don’t even know.

Anne: Yeah....A case in point of just a teacher who is very UNorganized and is still a very effective, very good teacher, would be the person I’m doing my student teaching under. If you go in her room, if you are an organized person, you’d go absolutely INsane. (laughing) She does have a bigger room this year, so you don’t notice the mess as much because there actually is space to walk. (laugh) But the kids love her – she is very hard. She’s very content-oriented, but she gets the job done wonderfully. And there’s just something about her organization that I’m seeing in her, because I’m a very organized person, that maybe that’s definitely NOT the biggest thing. And it seems like on this portfolio that’s really what they’re going for.

Dustin: I was gonna say, I bet she didn’t do a portfolio.

Anne: Oh no... (laughs)... but she’s a wonderful teacher.

Lisa: (prompting to Jenny)... okay..organization?

Jenny: I think the portfolio itself is very organized, because it tells you exactly where to put things in, but as far as organizing like everything like that, I’m not a person – I’m a very organized person, but I don’t organize like that. I organize it by how I learn it, (Anne interrupts: Yeah!) or where I think it should go, not just in a binder behind some tab that says that’s where it should go. I’d rather, like

if, my last competency, if I think it's close to my first one, I'd rather have my last competency behind my first one. I just want everything that's really close together to go in the same place, not all behind different tabs.

Anne: Yeah, it makes it really ineffective for us as individuals to use it because nobody organizes things in the same way. It's so strict on 'this has to be here' or else you have to go and re-do it and waste a whole bunch of more time. Whenever you're going to change it – if you're actually going to use it later – you're going to change it around anyway.

Jenny: I've already made one, and I put a lot a lot of time into it. It has, I think, six different sections, and every section had to have three different things in it. As soon as I was done with it, I hated it. I completely took it out and put everything back the way – where it was – before I took it out and put it in there. I put it in there to get a grade for it, then I took it out and put it how I wanted it – in my own professional file how I wanted it.

Dustin: I've done professional files in at least one of your classes [directed to me] and I've done one in at least two others, and they're more broad. They're like 'hey, this is YOUR file. You're the one who's going to be using it. We want you to use it later, just only for YOUR benefit. Organize it how you want.' They're just going to look at some of the stuff that's in there and make sure that

it's going to help you out. And I enjoyed doing that a LOT better. I mean, I'm an organized person, don't get me wrong. I just love trashing the portfolio. I'm very organized – my house is organized, my Army files and all my paperwork is organized, but it's organized in my organizational fashion.

Jenny: The other thing I liked better about the professional file is that it has more to do with my content area

Anne: Yes!

Jenny: I feel like so much of the portfolio is just draw based (?) the education thing. And, don't get me wrong, it's important. But I think that if was more centered on your subject area, it would be more beneficial for you to take in the classroom.

Katie: I guess I really hadn't dealt a lot yet with the organization. But that's definitely the part that scares me the most because I really don't understand a lot, like what they want from me. And so, I, like that kind of frustrates me because I don't know what they want. I hear stories about people who turn theirs in then they have to go back and re-do it, and they turn it in again and they have to go back re-do it. I'm just hoping I can get it right the first time.

Dustin: I don't know why they do it like that, because it makes it a lot worse on you [Lisa] and your counterpart who used to have an office next to you. Because you all have to look through them and you all have to explain them to us – so many students – what THEY

want, THEY being the people who evaluate the portfolios. You all have to explain what they want and help out the students. That's taking time out of YOUR life, instead of having something that the student can know themselves, it' just sooo...

Anne: And.. how can you get a good reflection of what kind of teacher somebody is going to be whenever they're concentrating so fully on what someone else wants for this project.. instead of... I don't know...things like... I don't know... it seems like it's all a lie in that point. Just because you're not doing it to benefit you, you're not doing it to represent you as a person and as your ability as a teacher. You're doing it how somebody else wants to do it. And so it's like.. when these people look at it, they're grading it all on the same criteria. They're grading it all as if it, you know, one person is doing every portfolio, and it's not a very good reflection of individuality, I don't think.

Dustin: I don't think they should use it. I'm sorry....

Lisa: Go ahead.

Dustin: I don't think it's good at all, because I'm a great 'B.S.er'... I can probably go through this portfolio. You give me a week, and I can probably – I probably have all the stuff I need for it right now on my desk. I could probably do my portfolio in a week and it'd be done. And they're going to totally evaluate me on that, instead of what I'm good at.

Jill: Yeah, I understand all that because I was one of the ones who interviewed for the teacher education program, and my portfolio didn't make it, just on one teacher's decision. They just said, "Oh, well, I don't think that that should count as two artifacts. So I think you should go re-do it." And...I was like... Oh. So I went to talk to another teacher about it, who said that it was fine. And then we went through a huge mess until it came to the point that they just said, "Okay, fine. We didn't mean that. We just mean to re-do all your reflections." So I don't understand the organization. I don't understand (laughing...) how they word the competencies, and I don't understand the reflections.

Lisa: Question # 4 (180) That is very interesting that you said that because that is my next question: Many people mentioned the term "reflection" when answering the original questionnaire. Please speak to the reflections that are a part of your portfolio.

Jill: Yeah, my reflections are bad, because they don't ever... I never learned how to do a reflection. And, like, I would turn mine in and the teacher would say it was fine or just put a little improvement on it, and then I'd turn it in to be graded, like my portfolio, and they said, "No, it's not reflective at all." And, I'd be like, "Oh, well, how do you make a reflection then?" So, no one would really help me with that. They finally just said, "You'll just get it when you're a junior." I was like, "I AM a junior." (laughing from

group) “Then maybe next year – before you graduate – you’ll have the whole reflection thing and you’ll just know how to do it.” And I was like, “Oh, Okay. Well, we’ll see – when that happens, it happens.

Katie: Yeah, like I’ve only written a handful of reflections, but like in all of my different classes, every teacher has told me to do them differently. And so when I did my teacher education interview thing, they went ahead and passed my portfolio, but they told me to re-do all my reflections. So, I really don’t know what to put in the reflections either. I have no clue.

Jenny: I don’t mind the reflections so much myself, but that’s just the kind of person I am – I reflect on a lot of things just in my daily life. But I hate having to write em down. I would rather just turn a portfolio in with all your stuff in it, and then when you’re in your interview or whatever, have them ask you why - It’s a lot easier to explain it in words or in person than to have to write it down. And another thing I don’t like about it, when you go through that little competency check-off, it tells you what you’re supposed to have gained from that competency. So all you have to do is write that in your reflection. (laughing) (Dustin interrupts: They like it when you do that). You don’t have to be reflective at all about it. You just have to put what they want to hear in it.

Anne: Exactly! Which to me kills the whole purpose of the whole thing.

Jenny: Yeah (others say... "exactly")

Anne: Like the thing with me – I'm very scientific minded. I'm very short, sweet and to the point. I write for me .. very good reflections as to things that I felt like I did well in that competency, things I feel like I could change to make better. But they always throw my portfolio back at me and say, "Make these longer." Half the time I think they don't even read them. Just because it doesn't fill up two pages doesn't mean it's a bad reflection.

Someone else(female): Exactly.

Anne: That's the thing that frustrates me – is that they seem to have to mandate your thoughts even.... (Jill: Right) in that sense.

Jill: And the whole thing with having to state the competency in there. I thought that was the point of writing it up at top and bolding it (Anne: Exactly!) I was like, "Gee whiz, can you read?" The top of the paper says exactly how this meets the competency.

Anne: The level of redundancy in the whole process just gets my goat every time. I think that's the thing that bugs me most.

Jenny: Another thing that I don't like about it is there's so many different ----- and I have never had a reflection that, all my reflections have been okay (Jill interrupts: I'm coming to you next time)---- there are so many different things you can be reflective

about, you know. When I write, I could go on probably forever, probably three or four pages, but who wants to? I get so sick of writing it, that by the time I get to the bottom of the first page that I just want to quit. And that's how it is with every single one. I have to do that with however many competencies there are.. I got to come up with...I don't mind looking back to see what I've learned because that's how I learn the best, or how I learned it or what I got from it. But how do you write it all out? I just hate it.

Dustin: I think a lot of people, when they say reflection they think of what we learned in high school or something... a reflection.. okay this is what we did – I observed... you know, I watched these kids do this. They think that's reflection. And...I know they're wanting more than that. I was going to say exactly what Anne said... I can get you to believe something or not believe something in two paragraphs. It don't [sic] take me two pages. I can say what I need to say and everything I need to say about it – and sometimes it will take up – I can write three, four or five pages on some things that I'm passionate about or that really changed me or I have to reflect upon it – I learned something good out of the whole experience, but there are some things that I knew what it was like going in to... and I knew what I was going to take out of it. And it was about what I expected, and there's not a whole lot of reflection to do.

Anne: Yeah, when things, you know.. like you say, when you're prepared, when you go into something when it goes well, what do you have to write about? This works. End of story.... (laughs)

Jill: I learned that I'm smart...

Dustin: Piaget WAS right...(laughing by entire group).. Hey...what do you know? (laughing)...

Lisa: Anything else on that one? If we need to add more as it comes up, we can....

Okay... Question #4 (counter)235.. Please discuss why you think Northwestern and the state of Oklahoma require the portfolio in the first place.

Anne: Well, I HOPE that they're just trying to make sure that they turn out quality teachers, but I don't think it's the best process they could use to evaluate that. Just for the simple fact that.. we do something in the class and get a grade for it, but yet we're graded again on the same thing by a different person in order to be considered "competent." When, I think, you know, if you went through the classes and you passed the classes, shouldn't THAT be the statement of your competency to be a teacher? Why do they have to go back and check themselves? I feel like that's all they're doing .. is that they're just trying to create a security blanket for themselves to say, "Well, we made em do this and this and this. So it's not our fault if they're a bad teacher."

Dustin: You're not doing any more field experiences or anything,
(Anne: Exactly!) you're not doing anything extra for the portfolio.

Katie: I agree, cause like all my teachers tell me that the portfolio is to evaluate the education program. And then... which makes me think to my own self, the reason why we have to keep going back and doing things over, is so the education program will look good. And it has nothing to do with our ability to teach...

Dustin: I came to Northwestern because I heard – believe it or not I had options to go to schools besides Alva, Oklahoma – and I chose Alva because I had just moved to Oklahoma my senior year. I had no idea about Southwestern, Northwestern... I didn't even know O.S.U. was a school. I'm from Texas now. All I knew about Oklahoma was the Oklahoma City bombing – that's it. I knew I wanted to be a coach and a teacher. They said, "Go to Northwestern. They have a great education program." So I came up here, you know. And they DO have a great education program, and they say they turn out a lot of teachers every year – which they do. But I've got friends from Southwestern that have got education degrees, and they've gone to Northwestern too. And they said, "yeah, Southwestern was a lot easier." But I'm beginning to think, now, that their degree at Southwestern is going to be just as good as the degree at Northwestern. And they're not having to go

through all this red tape. The courses here are excellent, but the portfolio... Is it just a Northwestern deal or is an Oklahoma....

Lisa: It's an Oklahoma deal, but every school implements it differently. Because, remember Betty (name changed), she came here from Southwestern.

Anne: Oh, poor girl...she had a nightmare.

Dustin: Her portfolio from Southwestern didn't work at all.

Anne: It was just awful. She had to redo it all in one semester.

(talk in the background... "That's not fair at all." "No, it's not.")

Dustin: I mean, teachers from any university across the state, they need to have...either one set thing or no set thing – just take the classes.

Jenny: It's (the portfolio) supposed to make sure they're turning out quality and competent teachers, but I guess I feel that probably 90% or more of teaching is how you interact with kids and how you get along with kids. And the portfolio does not measure that. The portfolio measures how good you can be reflective on your stuff that you do and how good you can do on classroom assignments. And it has nothing to do with how you are with children. I can think of three of my high school teachers that were probably very brilliant, but they could not get along with kids and they could not teach kids. And they are the worst teachers I have ever had. And the portfolio does NOTHING for that. And I do not consider those teachers

quality teachers because I didn't gain anything from them. I woke every morning dreading going to their classes, and I think it's more important – I would rather be a teacher that could just get across to my students in my own way and get along with them good (you know, not buddy-buddy, but a mutual respect) than being the smartest person, you know. Just because you're smart doesn't mean you're going to be able to get it across.

Dustin: In any educational or theory (educational psychology class), if an instructor asks you the question, what makes a good teacher, how do you evaluate a teacher? I guarantee you one of their first three answers is NOT going to be our portfolio. It's going to be your students' accomplishments – you know, how you felt at the end of the day, or you know, yeah, say I see you ten years down the road (looking at me) and you see how well I'm doing, you're like, "Hey, I taught that guy." Yeah, you know, you don't evaluate someone by reflection...(group laughs) sorry...I'm getting madder than Hell. (laughs)

Lisa: (Laughing) – that's not the purpose, I'm sorry.

Dustin: I've never thought about it this much...

Anne: You're 'reflecting' on it now... (laughs)

Lisa: Anything else have anything to say on this one?

Katie: Well, I disagree with him that... I love my classes and the courses at Northwestern, and I think they're great. But I do think

that sometimes that the portfolio thing interferes with them and just is.. yeah..

Dustin: But it is good, that they're trying to adapt the stuff to make it fit in your portfolio. That's good.

Anne: But it interferes with the flow of the class. (Dustin interrupts: "Learning") It interferes with our learning... sorry.. .stuff that matters. Like you say....How to interact with the kids.

Dustin: Yeah, what does a kid do – a student do – whenever they've already got that competency done? And that's the only one that fits. I ain't gonna do this.... You know... if that's all you want it for – to fit in my portfolio – I've got it done.... Can I go home?

Lisa: (question #5) counter 292 Okay...Now.. speaking of the competencies themselves, discuss the wording of the competencies.

Dustin: Vague.

Jill: Not measureable.

Group: AMEN

Jill: I won't tell you where I got it.

Dustin: Probably a teacher.

Jill: Can't tell you.

Anne: I want to know who came up with these things and if they were even actually a teacher themselves because, I'm sorry, anybody who has any practical knowledge of trying to teach kids...

would not word something that way. It would be very clear and concise as to what you want.

Jill: When we write lesson plans, we have to write clear objectives. And those objectives aren't clear. But you can't measure my understanding. You can't measure [voices of approval in the background] my knowledge because... yeah... so I really just should go into the next interview thing and just be like, "Oh well I didn't bring my portfolio... because I know it." [Jill claps....much laughter]. "You just ask me and I can tell you."

Anne: Also, in talking about them (the competencies), the thing that has probably frustrated me most in getting my portfolio through Benchmark 3 was simply the fact that there's at least four of those competencies that, I'm sorry, you cannot fill until you student teach. It is completely asinine to ask us to have an artifact for those whenever you're just going to take it out anyway, when it's just something that you've made up that you have no idea if it's going to work because you haven't done it yet.

Jill: Exactly!

Dustin: [laughing going on]... "What teaching style do you use?" "I don't know. Let me get my portfolio out and I'll tell ya. It's in here somewhere." [much laughing]

Jill: Even... "Mrs. Smith" came to class, in my integrated class, and talked to us about the portfolios – just like last week – and she even

would get one and she'd say, "Oh, well, you'll do that one when you student teach." We were like, you just said we had to turn this in before we student taught. She said, "Oh, well, yeah, you can just put..." And we were like, "yeah, what should we put in there? Go ahead and tell us."

Dustin: They're just making more work for themselves.

Jenny: And that really makes me mad. Want to know why?

Because I have to sit down in front of my computer for an hour and write a reflection for that, and I'm just going to replace it anyway [Anne: Exactly!] when I go out and student teach.

Lisa: Okay... that's definitely an issue then...

Dustin: They're making their own loopholes for themselves because they didn't cover it right...

Jenny: And they're just telling something that you can do to get by so you can get Benchmark 3 signed off so you CAN student teach.

Jill: Which makes me think – why are we even having Benchmark 3 if you're just supposed to put some things in there so you can get past there? Isn't she the one who grades them?

Lisa: It's everybody basically – the advisors...

Dustin: I want to do an oral portfolio...[laughing]

Anne: And this may be a slight tangent, but just in what we're talking about – just the inconsistency of the process I think is probably the other thing that really really bothers me. It's just... like

you say, she contradicted herself right there. Everyone talks in this flowery language, and, you know, all these sanctimonious and theoretical speeches about this wonderful portfolio, whenever they're contradicting themselves and not – you can't just get anybody to give you a straight answer about anything. I just want to sit all the education teachers down and say, "OKAY! Everybody write down what you think." And then I'm going to hold it up and show you that you all think something different!

Dustin: We need ol' Simon off of *American Idol* on there– he'd tell you how it is... [laughing]

Jill: Yeah, there needs to be something set – a set thing.

Dustin: No there doesn't. There doesn't need to be a portfolio.

Jill: Yeah, but if there's going to be a portfolio, there needs to be some set...

Lisa: anything else? Okay... Question #6 (counter #327) Will the completion of the portfolio make you a better teacher?

Entire group: NOOOO!!

Lisa: Okay... anyone say yes?

Dustin: No! What do you think? [laughs]

Lisa: It's not about me.

Dustin: I work at the after-school program at the rec. center.. right? Some of those kids are horrible. And the stuff I learned to discipline them, which we're not even supposed to discipline them because

they pay to be out there...but it's stuff I use from behavior intervention classes and discipline methods we learned in principles in methods and stuff like that. I'm like, hey this stuff works. And I integrated them there. And that's just like teaching. I mean, because half of teaching is organization – your own organization – and discipline and class control. And if you can't control the class, you can't teach. Portfolio...

Anne: No amount of paper and reflection is going to give you control.. .and....

Dustin: Did you have to do a portfolio to become a parent? [laughs] Did the portfolio make you a better dad? No...

Jenny: I feel that the portfolio basically is..all it is ... it's stuff you've done in other classes so I feel the portfolio part is just the reflections. So.. what are reflections teaching you? It's the coursework and the assignment that you did for that class that taught you something – not the reflection that you're putting into the portfolio... because you already got a grade on the assignment that you turned in. So.. if you got an "A" on that, obviously, you know what you're doing. So.. why do you have to put it in and write a reflection to tell you – for someone ELSE to look at it – and tell you for a second or third, or fourth, however many benchmarks there are [laughing] that... yeah, you know it... after the first teacher

when you did the assignment already told you you did?! It isn't the portfolio that teaches you anything; it's ...

Dustin: I'm sorry, but there are some college professors that need to be re-evaluated or do their own portfolios because....seriously, they are so book smart and know their subject matter so well that they cannot get it across to anybody.

Anne: They implement NONE of the practices that they are drilling into our heads.

Dustin: I can see that they don't want us to be like that, but good gosh, fix yourself, man. [laughs]

Katie: Well, I don't really have any additional thing to add, I guess, it's just that I agree with what they're saying. I don't see any possible way that it can make me a better teacher – at all – or how it could affect my teaching, positively or negatively.

Dustin: I can tell you how it well negatively – You won't graduate!

Lisa: Question #7 (counter 350). Okay, do you think that a poor portfolio is indicative of a poor teacher?

All: No, no.no.

Dustin: No... Look at mine. [laughing] Seriously.

Anne: Just being honest – I don't put my best work into the silly thing because I know I'm never going to use it again. So it's NOT a good reflection of me, as far as my writing skills and just my preparatory skills for things because I get so obstinate about the

whole process. I want to SEE how little I can to and get by. Just because I'm mad about having to do it in the first place.

Dustin: Every administrator I've talked to so far, including Alva High Mr. Parkhurst, they said they don't even open portfolios.

They're glad you did em. They know what goes into em, and they say, "We know you did it. If you graduated, you did it. Good for you. I'm sure it helped you. But, no, we don't need to see it."

That's coming from like six or seven administrators from across this area.

Anne: The only part of it that I could even see have any bearing on a job interview – getting hired – would be that first little section that's got your test scores in it, it's got the things about 'why' you want to be a teacher. And you do that in... Intro to Ed? I mean... hello...

Dustin: Yeah, you write your autobiography and why I want to teach.

Jenny: Yeah, I don't think anyone's gonna read it. They had better hire you on the skills that you have and not how reflective of a person you are.

Anne: Exactly!

Dustin: I don't ever, I haven't even put my autobiography in there yet, because it keeps changing.

Anne: Exactly!

Dustin: You know where I was a year ago? [laughing]

Jenny: I had this nice, big long one. And I just cut it down. I'm like, they don't need to know that much stuff about me...so...

Lisa: Question 8. Final thoughts...

Jenny: I have one. And it drives me insane. It's how... they tell you what to put in each competency. I hate that. It drives me insane.

It's just like teaching to a test. And, the last portfolio I did, they had six broad categories and said, pick three things. Actually, they weren't very broad; they were kinda specific. But, I know, there's probably 14 of us, and there wasn't two people who had the same three things in any section. And I just don't think that they should have to be assignments that are graded to be put in there because I think that people learn in a lot of other ways besides just what a teacher assigns you and then, 'oh, let's assign this, and then it will show that you know this so you can put it in your portfolio and it can be done.' I really don't like that. I'd rather have it just, I'm not saying to eliminate the assignments, but be able to put something else in there. Have more assignments worth less points or something and take the one that you feel is most relevant to that, instead of this one big huge one that every single person in the class is going to put into that section of the portfolio.

Anne: And kinda on the same token, there's so many things that I feel like would be so much of a better representation of what kind of teacher I'm going to be that I can't put in there because they don't fit anywhere. Just like, I've been a youth minister here in town for the past two years. That has taught me more about teaching than, I'm sorry, anything that I've learned in the college. The experience of doing it.

Jenny: And I think another idea of it would be like, there's that one, I know you've mentioned that you've seen HOW many legal issues and guidelines and timelines. Well, seriously, do you want to know how much time I've spent on that? About five minutes [laughter from everyone].

Anne: Do you know how much we remember of it? NOTHING...

Jenny: I think it would be a lot more beneficial, to just, as an assignment, say, I need you to create something that shows that you know this – not necessarily a timeline, just something. Let you choose – because you're going to do the project however you're going to learn best or however you're going to teach that or however you're going to practice it when you're teaching instead of just, oh yeah, look. All 60 of my kids in my intro to education class made a legal issues timeline, and every single one of them is the same, except, oh look 1975 may be up in this corner instead of down in this corner.

Jill: And even with that – sometimes when they’re looking through stuff like that – like with the committees. It’s completely different when they start looking through it, because they start saying, “Oh, well what’s this?” I’m like, okay, everyone in my class did this and we all put it in here, so you probably should know. This is what that is... they’re like, “Oh well what is that?”

Dustin: You told me to put it in there.

Jill: I had so many comments on my career power point that the entire class did... I had looked at everyone else’s from the years past. And I had so many comments on the fact that I did one of those. I was like, Yeah, Yeah I did. It’s not really a big deal. It took me about 20 minutes maybe.

Lisa: Anything else?

Anne: I think that there’s good intentions behind the process. But the way things stand right now, they’re not getting the job done. They need to make some serious serious changes in the way things are organized and in the way things are graded and in the consistency in which all of the above are done - if they’re going to continue to do it. Do I think it’s an accurate measure of what kind of teacher I’m going to be? No, but if they’re going to do it anyway, they need to make the changes that are necessary to make it at least half-way useful for what it’s supposed to be measuring.

Dustin: I just want to make an analogy real quick. A test, like in the class, is just a snapshot of what you know on that ONE day.

Agree? The portfolio is like a photo album – it sure is entertaining and good to look at, but it doesn't really tell you anything about the person. You don't know anything – you just look at stuff. The reflections help with that a little bit, because you know, you do reflect. I guess if I had to say something positive about it, it would be the reflections - even though they have their flaws too..

Jenny: What I want to say about it is, I transferred here. And I am READY. I have a year of stuff – education classes – before I can student teach. And when I got here, they're just like, yep, you gotta do this portfolio, yadda yadda yadda; and I had no idea -- I've already done a portfolio, and this one is so different than the previous one. And there's that little check sheet that tells you whatever competencies are going to be met in each class. Well, I took half of those classes in South Dakota, so how am I, you know. None of those other classes – I almost feel like when they say that those competencies are going to be fulfilled in that class, that the rest of the other teachers don't even worry about the stuff in that competency because they're teaching it to you in that class. So why should I teach it to you in this class where it might be, have a lot of relevance? I just feel that... I really don't like the portfolio workshops because I didn't gain anything from em.

Jill: I didn't either. It made me cry...

Jenny: I think the new portfolio workshops have to be redone because I just sat there and I really just – I just really wanted to beat my head against a brick wall [laughter] because I'm wasting my time.

Dustin: I think – the portfolio workshops – a lot of people they help – those who have to get it done that are graduating in two months {yeah}. I've seen so many people go through in one semester and go through being admitted into teacher ed, and then getting admitted, like two weeks after that, into the student teacher and then getting their degree. And they did their portfolio in one semester – going to workshops and stuff.

Jill: Yeah, for me I was also a transfer student. When I transferred over here, and I had no idea about the whole portfolio thing. I went to one of the first workshops. I had bought a notebook because I was warned about that, and she just talked about Benchmark 4 and Benchmark 3. And I just sat there staring, "I don't even know what an 'artifact' is. What are these 'competencies'? What's a 'reflection'?" And finally, she started answering my questions, because there was another girl from my intro to ed class too. So finally she started answering those questions, and she finally asked where we were. We were like, well, we have a notebook. She was

like, “Oh, well, uhhh... so, yeah...” That needs to be redone because... that was just a traumatic experience.

Anne: What they need to do is they need to section it off.. Okay, if you’re about to do Benchmark 1, here’s your workshop. If you’re about to do Benchmark 2, here’s YOUR workshop.

Jill: That’d be good. That’d be really good.

Anne: I’ve never understood why they haven’t figured that out yet...[laughs] Or even coming from my point of view last semester, going to some of em. I’m like ughhhh, you know, I learned this in Intro to Ed. I don’t need to know how to set it up. I need to KNOW the things.. like you said what you were saying scared you [to Jill] what, you know. Break this down for me. What is this competency trying to tell me so that I’ll know how to reflect on it the way you want me to?

Jill: Exactly. And if I went to one now, I’d want it to me more like that. But at the time, me and the other girl that were there, left, and we both were almost to the point of tears when we left the room. So we were just like, we’re never going to get through this. This is way too hard and scary.

Dustin: It’s almost to the point to where I want to drop my teaching certificate – education – and just get a degree in something else.. That’s how bad...

Katie: I've heard a LOT of people say that ... just because of the portfolio they're like changing they're majors and stuff...

Jill: I almost did..

Katie: And it has like nothing to do with anything except the portfolio. And that's the reason for it.

Dustin: I'm that close, Ms. Holder, seriously. To just testing out of it.

Jenny: I don't know. Someone told me just the other day. He goes, "Yeah, I'm getting a health and physical education major, but it's not teaching." I'm like, what are you thinking? He's like, "I just didn't want to do the portfolio." And he goes, "It's way too much time. And it's way too much work. And it doesn't accomplish anything..."

Anne: It's just another hoop.... And..

Dustin: They don't tell you that you know. I've had two people tell me that, you know, do that. They're like, "Go ahead. Do that. Get out of college. So that way you're certified. Then test. Take the elementary test." They don't want you to know that, but you can do that! [yelling] It's just the same – you're still certified! They don't want you to know that, but I know that now!

Anne: If I could have had it to do over again, I would have graduated last year and got alternatively certified, if I'd have known what I know now. I would not have wasted this year.

Dustin: I love learning the classes. But I'm not going to waste my time and money....

Jill: I've been really close to dropping a few times too... But, I just always come back to it... [laughter]

Dustin: I don't understand that...[laughter]

Jill: I really really have been considering it. But I think I'm going to stay now – just because I got past Benchmark 2.... I know it's not very far.. but

Dustin: Well, it's further than me....

Appendix H

Compiled Answers to the PAQ - Students

Key: 2103

Gender: Female – 20

Male – 8

Age: Female – 17 – 24 - 19

25 or more - 1

Male – 17 – 24 - 7

25 or more - 1

Class: Female – Freshman - 0

Sophomore - 6

Junior - 11

Senior - 2

Post-grad – 1

Male - Freshman – 1

Sophomore – 5

Junior – 2

Senior - 0

Cumulative GPA: Female – 3.5 – 4.0 - 10

3.0 – 3.4 - 6

2.5 – 2.9 - 4

Below 2.5 - 0

Male – 3.5 – 4.0 - 3

3.0 – 3.4 - 0

2.5 – 2.9 - 5

Below 2.5 - 0

Major: Female – Secondary English/Language Arts 2

Secondary Speech -1

Secondary Social Sciences -1

Secondary Health/Physical Ed -1

Elementary or Early Childhood – 9

Elementary or Early Childhood and Health/Physical Ed - 1

K -12 Special Education – 3

Health/Physical Ed. (no grade level specified) -1

Social Work Major/Speech pathology minor -1

Male – Secondary English/Language Arts - 1

Secondary English/Language Arts and Health/Physical Ed -1

Secondary Science – 2

Secondary Math - 2

Elementary or Early Childhood – 1
K-12 Special Education – 1

2103 Female:

1. I have not been told much about it.

I think the development of the portfolio is a positive process.

I feel that the portfolio would be a good tool, I have not started but I am excited to see what it is all about.

I think that it is great. I want to be the best teacher I can be, so anything that helps me learn what I need to know to achieve that is fine with me.

I am overwhelmed by the teaching portfolio. I dislike having to set up the portfolio outside of class. At this stage I need extra guidance and explanation.

My overall attitude is that the portfolio is very reflective but seems to be very repetitive[sic]! It costs a lot of money!

I think it is scary.

It seems really complicated and tough to get started. The workshop did not help much.

I feel that the portfolios are a great idea for the education department; however I feel that these should be explained and taught back in the classroom.

I feel the workshops so far haven't been scheduled at good times, and if classes aren't going to help then. . . therefore, I don't really understand most of it!

From all the horror stories I have heard, scared worried, and stressed. Not to mention how am I going to pay for everything!

I feel that their [sic] are a lot [sic] of classes offered that have competencies included, but the professor never really explains how to include it in your portfolio.

It's o.k.

My overall attitude about the pre-service teaching is pretty good, but I haven't done much for my portfolio yet.

The portfolio is a helpful component of our education, but is a lot of work.

Students dread them and teachers are starting to.

Haven't got to level of portfolio yet really.

The info I've received[sic] has prepared me in knowing what I will need to do.

Honestly I hate the actual portfolio but the professors have been great about helping me.

Wow! If it such a huge, messy process. I watched my mom do the portfolio and then I changed my major!!! (social work and speech pathology major)

2. I really haven't started or benefited from it's [sic] use yet.

I have not started on my portfolio.

I am very attentive to all handouts, lessons, aspects of teaching style and researching methods I observe in my student observations.

I am unsure at this time.

It really hasn't. It just shows basic information about the classes that we have taken.

It has given me an idea of the job I am going to have in the future.

The portfolio has currently been no help. I have not had any instruction about how to set it up.

Dunno.

I am just getting started.

No at all so far! Besides stress me out more due to all the extra assignments.

I haven't gotten that far yet.

Have not completed portfolio.

Help me organize and prepare so I can decide what to put in it.

Haven't been involved with it long enough to affect me.

It has not helped me in my education yet.

Not yet.

I haven't got to that level.

I hate the reflections but they've helped me learn more about myself as a teacher so I guess the work is worth it but we could do that in a class.

Don't have enough personal experience with the portfolio to answer the rest of these questions!

3. It has not been explained to me.

Not understanding fully what it is, why we need it, what it consists of, etc.

There is really no frustration, but my fear is not knowing how to do it but I know that there will be people to help.

I haven't been able to attend a workshop b/c they are always scheduled during my classes.

The portfolio workshop did not help with the set up of the portfolio. It was set up more to help upper level students with their questions.

Not enough help and detailed explanations. It seems that the requirements are changing constantly. The money involved is a concern because they expect so much and we want to make it look presentable.

The portfolio workshop frustrated me because they did [not?] help me at all.

Lack of knowledge about what exactly is needed in the portfolio (what should be kept from my education classes and what I should not. It is assumed we already know what to do.)

The workshop was sort of frustrating. We went over lots of things I did not know.

As a transfer student, I need in the Teacher's Ed. Program this semester, and it looks like I will not have the artifacts. That isn't really fair because I didn't have the opportunity[sic] to do the stuff before now.

A little frustration just trying to get everything organized and started up. I have heard good and bad about them so I am trying to keep an open mind.

Not understanding what the point is to all the work involved [sic].

All the competencies[sic], where they go. . . .

Getting started.

Haven't worked on it much yet.

Nothing.

The lack of understanding and confusion about how it needs to be set up.
I don't know enough yet.

All of the different things that have to be included.

Time consuming: A lot of wasted time!

4. No idea.

The portfolio would be a good reference tool for any information I would need.
Hey, I'm keeping my education books, my notes, papers and portfolio so I can always refer back to anything that would help me teach better or a student learn better.

I hope that I am able to use it as a reference of my work when interviewing for a job.

I will never use again.

Once I set up an actual portfolio, I think it may help me a lot, but at the moment, I'm not sure.

Maybe for references for the future

I am not really sure, I was sort of confused about that myself.

I'm not sure.

Hopefully for a job interview, but after talking with new teachers they say the schools could care less about portfolios!

I don't see myself ever using it again!

I will use it to get ideas from it to help my students.

I have thought about some things I am putting in it they are things I will want to look back on for reference later. [r.o. sic]

As a reference tool.

I see no use for it past my graduation.

To aid me in my 1st year of teaching and further.

If I have problems w/a student I can look back for ideas. But most that I know w/ a degree in teaching, never use their portfolio.

Some of my friends have graduated and took it to their future employers and they just looked at their philosophy and autobiography and handed it back. That surprised me. If this isn't going to help me get a job then what's the point?

5. Teachers to explain the process a little better to the students

I'm assuming to [sic] development of a portfolio was covered in Ed Seminar (which I haven't taken yet), so further explanation in other classes would be beneficial to students like me.

I would like to know what exactly is in the portfolio. I have some idea but I would like to know all of its information.

I think it's great.

I need more help with portfolio set up at this point.\

Explain more!! Don't make us do repetitive[sic], stupid pointless things.

Explain at the beginning better, because it is hard to be lost in the middle it makes more stress than needed. [sic]

More applicable instruction of what is needed and what it should contain.

Have portfolio workshop for beginners and one for people almost done. That would help me greatly.

Be able to have a class set up every week just to show you [know] how to do portfolios until you get the hang of it.

It is overwhelming!

Not require so much, spelling and punctuation so perfect, it gets money and time consuming – we are broke!

I feel we should put the portfolio together in a class instead of a workshop, therefore everyone is at about the same spot.

None at this time.

No suggestions

I like how they are integrating into classes (competencies) and there should be some more one-on-one help.

Making the workshops more available to student's [sic] who go to school and work and have little time to go to a workshop.

The portfolio class needs to be more informative. Describe things better.

More portfolio workshops – maybe break them up into stages.

Less in depth.

6. Nothing at all.

Yeah, I'll share some of my load Want to help?

n/a

No, just a lot of frustration!!

I hate it!

No.

No.

Not really.

Glad I don't have to make a complete portfolio.

2103 Male

1. It seems like too big of a project for my first semester in the Educ. Department.

I know this may not help, but I really don't know much about the portfolio. I do believe that it's a good idea to have them.

The portfolio items can be incorporated[sic] into class assignments making the portfolio unnecessary.

I don't really think it is necessary, if a person seeking to be a teacher can prove themselves in the classroom I don't see how this book will help.

I personally think that the portfolio process is a lot of work that is not needed. If you want to be a teacher and you can make it through school, you should be able to go for it.

I am dreading it, but feel that it s something that will help me get a job.

I don't really want to do it, but I think it's mainly because I don't know how.

I have not really thought about my portfolio yet. I don't have much of an opinion.

It does kind of worry me since I don't even have it started.

2. Not yet. (haven't done anything with it yet.)

I just began the program, so I would say No at this time.

It hasn't.

I don't know yet.

I really don't know.

I don't think I've even started a portfolio yet.

It hasn't had any effect yet.

3. The bio sheets. Wherever I go, the folder follows.

Obtaining the new revision so I can start on mine.

Everything.

The time it is going to take is going to stress me out. The program calls for so much time and I work full time at Wal-Mart.

Finding the time between full time student and full time job.

The fact that we have to record every single thing that we do concerning education.

I have not learned anything, that I need to do with it yet.[sic] That is very frustrating.

4. I believe it'll help me get an excellent coaching job as well as teaching. It will better prepare me.

I do not see any use for the portfolio. A student shared a story about a friend who went to a job interview. The graduate asked if the principal wanted to see the portfolio. He said NO. The graduate handed him the portfolio and said I went to a lot of trouble to make this and YOU WILL look at my portfolio.

Sitting on a shelf collecting dust.

I don't know.

It will help me to get a job and start my career.

I highly doubt I ever look at it after graduation.

I don't foresee it being very helpful.

5. I don't know much about the portfolio.

Make the purpose and process more clear.

No.

I think it should be made easier and less time consuming.

Get rid of it or make it a little smaller of an issue.

None.

6. I haven't even begun to work on my portfolio yet. Also, I haven't been to the workshop so I really don't know anything about them yet.

No. I don't think so.

It needs to be taught earlier in the college career. I am one semester away from interviewing and still have no slue about the portfolio.

Key: 3032

Gender: Female – 23

Male – 7

Age: Female – 17 – 24 – 14

25 or more - 9

Male – 17 – 24 - 3

25 or more - 3

No answer - 1

Class: Female – Freshman - 0

Sophomore - 0

Junior - 0

Senior - 23

Male - Freshman – 0

Sophomore – 0

Junior – 0

Senior – 7

Ethnicity: Female

Native American – 0

African American – 0

Latino/Hispanic – 0

Caucasian – 23

Other – 0

Male

Native American – 0

African American – 0

Latino/Hispanic – 0

Caucasian – 7

Other – 0

Cumulative GPA: Female – 3.5 – 4.0 - 16

3.0 – 3.4 - 4

2.5 – 2.9 - 3

Below 2.5 - 0

Male – 3.5 – 4.0 - 2

3.0 – 3.4 - 4

2.5 – 2.9 - 1

Below 2.5 - 0

Major: Female

Elementary or Early Childhood Education - 17

Secondary English/Language Arts – 1

Secondary Math - 0

Secondary Science - 1

Secondary Social Sciences - 2
Secondary Health/Physical Ed – 1
Secondary Business - 0
Other – 1(not specified)

Male – Elementary or Early Childhood Education - 1
Secondary English/Language Arts - 0
Secondary Math – 1
Secondary Science - 1
Secondary Social Sciences – 0
Secondary Health/Physical Education – 4
Secondary Business - 0
Other - 0

3032 Female:

1. My overall attitude is that it would be fine to do one where every faculty member knows exactly how it is to be constructed. Also, they should point out the projects in class as we do them, which comp that they fulfill. The portfolio has been a useful project. But sometimes it has been more of a burden. Many of the comps want us to reflect on things (lesson plans) that we have no way of reflecting on. How can I change something if I haven't presented it.

I feel the portfolio is a good idea to an extent. All the competencies are a little much. No administrator will want to look at something that extensive. The section 1 with the why I want to teach and ed. Philosophy is a good idea but I don't see why you need the autobiography. I have asked students who have just entered their first year of teaching if the interviewer asked to see the portfolio and they all have said, "No."

I think the portfolios are a good idea in theory; however, they are becoming a standardized assessment format. To be effective, I think the portfolio needs to be more open to the individual characteristics of each student.

Overall, I'm very indifferent when it comes to the portfolios. I understand the purpose is to try and make us better teachers by producing evidence that we understand and can implement the standards set forth by the portfolio process. However, it often becomes more work than it's worth. With everything else we have to do, it sometimes is an added stress that I could do without.

At first, I did not like the portfolio because I felt confused by faculty expectations and no one seemed to be able to give me a consistent answer to my questions about the portfolio. Now that I have it together and almost finished it was not that bad.

I think the teaching portfolio is very beneficial to have. Personally, I think it is a lot of busy work, but in the long run I think it is going to be good to have especially when you go out to get a job.

I think the portfolio is a good idea to some extent. The only thing that makes it hard on students is that they keep changing the requirements and not every teacher gives you the same answer.

The portfolio has positive and negative attributes. In time it will be a great asset to NWOSU.

I try to be positive and believe that it is a useful tool, but sometimes I have a negative attitude because of all the work involved.

I think the portfolio is a great way to assess learning, but the student whom[sic] successfully completes the portfolio may not be a good teacher. I believe through experience one develops professionally.

I have no problems with the portfolio. It is actually a good way to document the progress of students and the course of their studies. I think that a lot of students whine too much about the portfolio.

I understand the need for it and I appreciate all of my paperwork being in one place. I feel that it does go into a little too much detail in the competencies though.

I think that the teaching portfolio is over-rated. All the schools that I have talked to don't even want to look at it.

The portfolio is a fine guide and helps with personal growth but I think it is ridiculous to require some of the items in the format because most students cannot afford to spend the money, especially after tuition and books (i.e. plastic sheet papers, etc.)

My overall attitude about the portfolio is negative. In general I feel like it is not a real representation of my knowledge and it is a waste of time.

Personally, I feel it's a way for the school to be evaluated for their accreditation and not much for our benefit. I see the benefits for the pre-service teacher, but right now it's my worst enemy!

It is a lot of tedious work. Some of it I feel is needed but some of it seems like busy work. I understand the basis for the portfolio and can see how it could be a good thing.

I feel that it does not accurately reflect the student. I also believe that it has no relevance because it (the artifacts) has already been graded by a teacher, so why waste time writing a cover sheet for it and putting it into a portfolio.

I think it is very confusing and frustrating! It is very difficult to complete correctly because each teacher/professor will give you a different answer as to how they are supposed to be completed. i.e., does this fit here, etc. It seems there is very little cooperation and understanding on the part of the professors.

I think it is a good concept but the portfolio is supposed to show mastery of competencies. I feel a student cannot show mastery of these competencies until he/she teaches in a classroom. I feel it would be more beneficial if the student was asked to complete a portfolio after the first year of teaching.

My overall attitude is neutral. I don't like being required to do extra work just for someone to evaluate me. I do understand why we are required to do a portfolio. It is another type of assessment for teacher education.

My attitude toward the portfolio is not a good one. I feel that you do the coursework; the professor gives you a grade for that work, that should be sufficient. But no, it's like redoing work over and over again.

2. It has to a certain extent[sic]. Without having to do it, I would have only written lesson plans in one class and that was in my senior year.

I have learned about the education process more than if I hadn't had the portfolio. It made me read and create projects I wouldn't have if I hadn't had it. I don't feel it has helped me at all. I have not learned anything out of the process. I have learned everything I know from the classroom teachers. I think it has helped me to see my growth as far as knowledge of the education process is concerned.

Working on the portfolio has brought me out of my comfort zone and has forced me to write beyond more than I like. It has been a challenge, but it has been good.

The portfolio has helped me realize that there are several options for creating lesson plans and that I can be creative as a teacher.

It shows a lot of the work that I have done in all of my classes here at NWOSU. It also shows the growth I have made since my first semester here.

It has not helped me at all. It has been more of a burden.

Being able to apply the competency to an artifact has unfolded the confusion of what Oklahoma is asking us to teach.

It has helped me see that I am reaching the goal of understanding all of the competencies and to be able to decide what my best work is and what is not.

I have learned and applied educational theories. Because writing is a huge component to the portfolio, I have become a better writer. I have reflected on my experiences.

Reflection has definitely been a good thing for me. Most areas of life would improve if people would just take time to stop, reflect, and then try to improve that area. I wish I had learned to reflect at a much younger age.

It has allowed me to pull all of my information together and review all that I have been through. It has helped me think of all the ways I have learned about the teaching profession.

Only keeping things organized. I don't even remember some of the stuff that I put in it.

The portfolio has helped me see my personal growth in the teacher education program and has shown me my areas of weakness that I need to develop.

It has not. What it has done is create a higher level of stress than is really necessary and a lot of unnecessary worry.

Yes. Despite my negative attitude at the present time, it does provide great ways to review and REFLECT what we've learned. If understood, it's a great application tool.

It has given me the opportunity to look at many of the elements of teaching in a new light. There is a great deal more to teaching than I thought there was when I began my portfolio three years ago.

It has not.

It has helped me think about my assignments and how I can use what I have learned.

It has helped me understand fully the term reflection and how to reflect.

The portfolio is just extra work that is a repeat of work completed and is required for education classes. The portfolio has not helped me, but does help professors evaluate my class work and my growth through my education course work.

3. The fact that it changes every year. The people who come into the program now have a better understanding of how it is constructed. Faculty on all campuses should solidify what is expected and tell us.

I'm secondary, if you are going to have this work smoothly, let us use papers from our major courses. I talk with elementary majors and they have many more opportunities to get artifacts yet we are all supposed to be on level playing ground when it comes to the portfolio.

Everyone tells us different ways of doing it. Plus, the Alva and Enid campuses are so different. If I get an Enid education teacher during my exit interview, I feel they will rip me apart. Also, the lack of respect Health and Physical education teachers receive.

I am frustrated with the way the portfolio process is constructed. It is too indecisive! I am tired of redoing petty things such as tab labels because of changes made as to how they should be printed.

The most frustrating thing has been the inconsistency among the NWSU education dept. staff. It seems that every teacher has a different answer to the same question. Also, there are discrepancies between the Enid campus and Alva campus.

Like I said before, a lack of coherent, comprehensive instructions concerning the portfolio.

I think the main thing that people get frustrated with concerning their portfolios is all the changes that are made to it, because then everyone has to back and change their portfolios to fit the new specifications and guidelines.

The miscommunications and changes they keep making on the requirements.

Not knowing the meaning of the portfolio terms. Not having a clear understanding of the expectations and evaluations being on the same track.

The reflective commentary, because what may work for one instructor, doesn't work for another; therefore, I don't know how much or how little to write.

Discrepancy between the Enid and Alva professors. I am confused most of the time because the "rules" are always changing.

Reflections seem hard to write to fulfill the criterion in the 13 areas. It has been helpful in class where the teacher requires a reflection with the projects turned in for a grade. That way I feel the teacher has graded the project and reflection and they just go straight into the portfolio.

Having the rules/requirements changed constantly and being told different things by almost every instructor.

You HAVE to have it completed before you student teach and graduate.

The constant changes to the format and the requirements to be admitted to the teacher ed. program have been very frustrating. There isn't much of a consensus regarding terms to use (i.e. I feel..., or I know...) between professors.

The bulk of my frustration is caused by the evaluation process. Professors at benchmarks 1 and 2 may like my work and then different professors at 3 may say it is all wrong. There are not defined criteria.

Reflections. I feel as though I'm restating everything twice. First I reflect on the artifact for the course I completed it for – then I reflect again for the competency⁶. I get to the point where I feel as though I'm trying to over-prove my understanding. That is frustrating because people with more education than I should be able to understand what I'm trying to accomplish by putting the artifact with the competency in the first place.

The reflections. I understand that it is very important to reflect on my actions taken, but I never seem to put down what my advisor is wanting. Also, the time it takes the teachers to review the portfolio. I don't like having a short amount of time to make corrections.

I think it is frustrating that you cannot easily find one artifact per competency. Reflections are frustrating because mine are usually too short. Then the person reviewing the portfolio will say, "You need to expand on this." Why? You want to know what it meant to me and I told you. Do you want me to "B.S." on my reflection or tell the truth?

The differences in criteria each professor has.

That the school doesn't have a one hour class to help organize and prepare. However, the professors at NWOSU have made many efforts in helping us with the process. Another thing is that everyone tells you a different thing concerning the requirements.

The frustration with the portfolio is the time. I am one of the few people in the US that does not own a computer and finding time to work on this portfolio is very difficult. Cost is another frustration. The cost of the portfolio is frustrating on top of the cost of books, tuition and all of the projects that are required of you from every class that you are required to take. Not to mention the gasoline to get back and forth to school.

4. In my opinion it will be a good reference that I can go to while it sits on my office shelf.

I don't think it will be much help. I've talked to people that have graduated and not one has had anyone want to see the portfolio.

Not much use after graduation especially since I plan on going to California.

I do not foresee using very much at all. Hopefully, later in the future the process/portfolio will become a better after graduation tool, but as of now most admin. I speak to regard it as a "paper weight." They don't have time to look at it. I truly don't. I take that back, I will use many of my artifacts such as my discipline plan, games created, etc. I can see myself using more as a filing or organization system for all my test scores, transcripts, etc.

I might use some of the lesson plans in my portfolio; however, I have talked with several school administrators who say that they don't even look at the portfolios so I don't see it playing a big role in my career as a teacher.

Well, I plan on taking it with me when I go out to look for jobs so the school's administration can see some of the work that I have completed over my years at NWOSU.

I am guessing that I probably will not use my portfolio after graduation.
A place to store information making it available for interviews.
I don't, unless a principal might want to see some of my work.
I am really proud of my philosophy of education paper and plan to use that to obtain employment. I can use the artifacts to demonstrate my competency to future employers.
Many of the projects will help me in my teaching, and the portfolio will be easy to access for those projects. I hope that in interviewing, the administrator will at least look through the portfolio as a guide to my work.
I would have it available if a job interviewer wanted to see it. Mostly, I would know where to find all of my credential information.
I don't know if I will use it.
I see using some artifacts as reference guides to help me in my future classroom. But I do not see the portfolio helping me get a job as most employers will not have the time to read it.
I don't. I have had numerous principals say they would never look at it for employment purposes.
I'm an early childhood major and I will likely put portfolios together of my students' work. Beyond that, I won't probably encounter another one until I go back to get my Master's.
This is something that bothers me. Every administrator that I have talked to said that they would not likely look at my portfolio in order to hire me. So, I wonder why I have spent four years working on it?
I see it as wasting space.
Bookend, doorstop, fuel for the fireplace! There are a couple of good artifacts that I may want to refer to, but most of it I really don't care about.
I will use it if a hiring committee asked to use it.
I will never use my portfolio!
In my opinion, I don't really see using it at all. People I've spoken to in the past few years say it is stuffed in a closet and has never been looked at again.
5. Start competencies at the very start and in each education [class] build on the number of competencies done. That way by the time the student teaches, they have all competencies.
Get all the professors on the same page for several years about the portfolio. Have the professors make up a portfolio of their own.
Shorten the competencies to your best work not just random work to fill the requirements.
I think the number one thing that could be done for improvement would be to increase consistency among professors and campuses.
My biggest suggestion is for all the professors of both campuses get together and really discuss what is expected for the portfolios. Due dates, criteria, etc. I'm sure you do this already, but this week being with people from both campuses has been very frustrating for me. Of course, we are all talking about the portfolio and I hear 50 different things concerning the same issues. It really made me second guess some of my decisions about my own portfolio, and

where I thought I was on the right track and then I hear other people talk and then I think maybe I'm not.

Make sure that all faculty know what is expected of students concerning portfolios. NWOSU should want to represent a unified ideal within their education program. When projects are completed during classes. Students should be required to complete a reflection immediately.

I think all professors should be on the same page about the portfolio. All professors want different things for your portfolio.

I don't think that there needs to be so much to it. Shorten it up.

Students should have a class that is strictly for portfolios and the bookstore should sell portfolio packets for one set price.

Have one way that the reflective commentaries need to be to please all the instructors.

Consistency!

More teachers could require reflections with their projects as a part of the grade. This way students get them done during class, put them right in their portfolios, and the quality of the reflection should get better and better.

I wish there were clear, unchanging guidelines that stay in place and are agreed on by all instructors. I wish that they were reviewed and approved at least 1 -2 weeks before graduation to prevent errors.

Lower the requirements and don't make it such a big deal.

Alva campus and Enid campus professors need to get together to discuss what they all expect and want to see in the portfolios, mainly the reflective commentaries. Have at least one professor from the student's home campus on the exit committee.

Set evaluation criteria and make those the only criteria that can be used to evaluate. Some professors require theory. Others don't. Some will accept 1 page reflections; others want you to expand. I don't know what is expected of me.

Benchmarks are a good idea – I'm glad they were designed. It kept me on top of the dreaded thing.

Have it more organized. Teachers should help more.

I think that it should be reviewed and replaced by a performance assessment. I think that each class should have one required assignment that meets one comp completely and the teacher should document a pass/fail.

More cooperation between staff! It's really upsetting when one person tells you, "Yes, this is good. It will fit there." Then your review board says, "This doesn't fit here. Change it."

I feel it would benefit the students a great deal if the professors at NWOSU would get on the same page. Each professor has a different criterion at NWOSU and it is hard as a student to try and meet each professor's criteria.

More information and better organization about the portfolio process. Inform all education teachers on the requirements.

If the portfolio is going to be a requirement, the professors that teach should make it an assignment for the artifact and reflection to be done in class and every part of the assignment to be put in the portfolio at that time. I feel as if the

competencies should be worded to where the students could better understand what is required of them. Some competencies are not understandable.

6. I don't feel that we should live or die by them.

The process if to stay at the extent it is needs to become uniform from one teacher to the next. We need to know what is expected of us.

Consistency, consistency, consistency. Oh, and better explanations of what the portfolio actually is in Education Seminar and Intro. to Ed. When I came in, teachers just started talking about portfolio and I was like what's this portfolio.

I don't know how they introduce the portfolio now, but when I started the Ed. Program, I didn't know much about the portfolio until I had already taken about 20 hrs. of ed. Classes. I am not a very organized person anyway and not knowing what to save and what to do with it, that was hard for me now. That is why my portfolio is so weak. Part of it is my fault but I just recommend that they keep students on top of it at the start of the education program so they don't get behind. I also think they should mention it more in each education class.

Overall, I think the process of completing a professional portfolio is meaningful and beneficial.

I do believe the portfolio has helped me grow professionally.

I think it has come a long way and the flow is much better than in the past. Good progress is being made.

I see its worth but wonder if other universities, large ones especially, require them. If not, what is the reasoning?

To me, it's almost a waste of time because chances are I won't ever use it in the future. If there is anything that I can use in my own personal classroom, then I have it in my resource file at home. And when we apply at a school, we have to give them a resume and a transcript anyway. They most likely will not ever look at my portfolio.

I know of several students that graduated in the past. They were informed that they needed to add artifacts to the portfolio to graduate by 1 or 2 persons on their committee (exit), but the other person disagreed.

I think that during classes, professors need to talk about what competencies they are covering and how the assignments cover the comps.

I feel that the teachers should agree more on what they want as a whole.

More emphasis on portfolios in the classes! If an assignment will fit into

Competency one, Tell us! It shouldn't be a big secret.

I can't wait to be finished with it and graduate from college.

I feel that if the portfolio is going to be a requirement, it should be notified to students in the handbook and put an estimate cost on the portfolio (the finished product). I also feel the technology is important, but some people are still not up to date with technology and this could be a problem for some students.

3032 Male

1. I'm not real fond of it. I would be different if the people that hire us actually looked at it and used it in the hiring process.

Overwhelming. When I was first taught about it, I did not realize how detailed it was going to be. It is also hard because things keep changing.

I am totally against it. TO me it is nothing more than another obstacle[sic] that takes up way too much of my time. B.S.

I feel that there is too much emphasis on the portfolio. Education department makes it a life or death subject.

I do not like the portfolio. It is stupid. Everyone says it will help me get a job, but in reality it is just more work for me to do.

Theoretically, the portfolio is a good performance assessment. It still is not foolproof if somebody knows they have to do it to get a degree. The one concern I have is that faculty is not on the same page. I have asked the same question to multiple faculty members before and got multiple different answers.

I believe that much of the details of the portfolio are overly costly. I believe that the ways the artifact reflections are expected to be are nit-picky. In communicating with about eight members of the previous graduating class, none of them used their portfolios in any ay to find teaching employment.

2. I guess it made me a packrat.

It is nice to look back and see all the things I have done to help prepare me for teaching in the field.

It places a great deal of stress on me. I do not believe it has helped prepare me at all.

Given me a place to put my transcript and test scores.

It has not helped me at all.

Yes, it has helped me realize and prepare for all facets of teaching: planning adapting to student needs, behavior management, legal responsibilities, etc.

I have found that the portfolio is an expensive waste of time!

3. We really not [sic] cover it in any classes. To know how to go [sic] the portfolio you have to get help on your own time. Which can be difficult!

Things being changed, lost disks, and figuring out where to put things.

Deadlines!!!

The reflections. Nobody has taught us what they should be like.

Just doing the portfolio has caused me frustration. Also, all of the times that they change stuff.

The drastic changes made from the time I've started taking ed. Classes until now has hurt my portfolio. My assignments and work from early classes don't give me too many artifacts. However, almost every assignment in any ed. Class can go in the portfolio now.

Cost/ time/ lack of consistency among professors on exactly what is expected/ very subjective

4. No [sic] much of it. Most of the people who have gone out to get a job said that people just look at a few of the things or nothing at all.

It will be nice to take to interviews. Hopefully people will sincerely look at it and what I have accomplished.

I don't. I will use my resource file for almost everything I need help with.

Right now I see no use at all for it. My resume and interview will get me a job and hands-on experience will help me keep it. NOT A PORTFOLIO!!

I will not use it. All of the superintendents that I have talked to said they won't even look at my portfolio.

Every administrator I have discussed portfolios with doesn't care to see them.

They don't realize it's a performance assessment for graduation.

Using it as a coaster!

5. Have part of a class that deals with competency writing.

It would be nice to have maybe[sic] a one credit class strictly on the portfolio. I know we discuss it in Intro to Ed and other classes, but if there was a class which only focused on the portfolio, things might run smoother.

Drop it. It's a pain in the ass.

If we have to do it, let it be what we want, not what the education department wants us to say!

Get rid of them. There is enough work in the teacher education program that you do not need a portfolio. All a portfolio is stuff you have already done and you have to go back and do it again.

Discussing portfolios in depth in either ed. Seminar or intro. to ed. They may do that now anyway. I don't know.

Get organized on expectations! Better yet ditch the portfolio altogether.

6. Although it can be overwhelming at times, in the long run it should pay off.

No. And I am very serious about my answers.

I don't see how a portfolio should have so much weight and then the department tries[sic] not to let us teach. The portfolio does not determine our teaching abilities[sic].

I do not like portfolios and I do not think we should have to do them.

It should not be our livelihood for graduating. I don't know how much weight it actually carries. That should be discussed with students so they know where it stands. Some people are obsessed with it, for better or for worse.

It is an expensive waste of time. Do people realize how much we spend the portfolio. I am paying my own way

Key: 3413

Gender: Female – 15

Male – 2

Age: Female – 17 – 24 – 9

25 or more – 6

Male – 17 – 24 - 2

25 or more - 0

Class: Female – Freshman - 0

Sophomore - 0

Junior - 11

Senior - 3

Recertification – 1

Male - Freshman – 0

Sophomore – 0

Junior – 1

Senior – 1

Ethnicity: Female

Native American – 0

African American – 0

Latino/Hispanic – 0

Caucasian – 15

Other – 0

Male

Native American – 0

African American – 0

Latino/Hispanic – 0

Caucasian – 2

Other – 0

Cumulative GPA: Female – 3.5 – 4.0 - 9

3.0 – 3.4 - 2

2.5 – 2.9 - 3

Below 2.5 -1

Male – 3.5 – 4.0 - 2

3.0 – 3.4 - 0

2.5 – 2.9 - 0

Below 2.5 - 0

Major: Female

Elementary or Early Childhood Education - 14

Secondary English/Language Arts - 0

Secondary Science - 0

Secondary Social Sciences - 0

Secondary Math - 0

Secondary Health/Physical Ed – 0
Secondary Business - 0
Other – 1 (recertification)

Male – Elementary or Early Childhood Education - 2

3413 Female:

1. Not applicable to my situation.

I'm hoping that it isn't as stressful as I've heard.

I think that it requires a lot of work, and I have no problem with doing it as long as it will be used and looked at by my future employers.

I understand the set up and form of the portfolio. However, not one class that I have had here has even taken the time to explain how to write a reflection for the articles.

I was extremely overwhelmed and confused when beginning to learn how to start my portfolio. I never really understood the purpose of the portfolio.

I really don't understand the purpose of the portfolio.

Somewhat negative.

I think the portfolio is a good idea for helping us put our work into an organized file, but I believe that it is too involved. I do not think that it shows our mastery of the classes.

I do not have a good attitude about the portfolio. I believe it is a waste of valuable time. Instead of worrying about other important issues in my education, I am forced to work on something that will not even be used after my graduation. I don't like the portfolio service. It won't affect[sic] the way we teach in the future. It is just a waste of time.

I don't feel that the portfolio does what it is supposed to do. I think that there is more 'make believe' in the portfolio than is actually in the students' understanding.

The pre-service and getting the portfolio set up was helpful.

I think the portfolio is fine. The only thing that I do not agree with is that everyone has different ideas about how to put the portfolio together and what is or is not an artifact.

I haven't really been able to start working on my portfolio. Not too many classes discuss it very well. Many classes seem to mention the word "portfolio" a lot but hasn't [sic] seemed to describe it well.

I'm kind of confused. I need to look at a portfolio to understand how to do it. I've attended a portfolio workshop but still need some help.

2. It really hasn't done anything except add stress to the already time consuming classes that I'm taking.

It has helped me to be organized and responsible, but I think information wise I would get the same effect in doing the observations and other activities w/o having to write it all down on paper.

I can't think of really any way the portfolio has helped prepare me for. Maybe to show me what the important things are from my classes.

It has caused me to take more time to reflect on the lesson or experience that I would otherwise have done.

I do not think that it has helped me in my preparation. The classes are what have helped me and the time spent in the classrooms. I find it difficult to prepare and maintain the portfolio.

I don't believe the portfolio has helped me very much at all. It has been more of a hindrance than a helpful tool.

The assignments I have had to do for the portfolio are the only ones that have helped me. For example, I made a PowerPoint presentation over visual impairments and that is the only thing that helped give me an idea about visual impairments.

The portfolio, I can't see so far how it has helped me in any way. It has been more of a nuisance[sic] than a help.

It has helped because you can look back at your reflection to see how you observed a certain situation.

I have become[sic] more prepared. For example, I was able to create classroom management plans as well as learn the history of education. I have taken pride and been professional when working on the portfolio.

It helps you be organized and prepared for other education classes. It provides ideas for other education classes.

OK, I guess.

3. I have not seen an example of what someone else has done since there has been a change in the way the portfolios are put together.

I felt that we are just kind of thrown into making it. I know we have portfolio workshops, but we all have other classes and work that we have to do also, and we can't always make it to the workshops.

The simple fact that not one professor has told anyone why we have to do it and what specifically they are looking for.

Just that I don't know what I need to use for each competency. I don't know where everything is supposed to go.

I don't know how to do it. No one has ever really explained it to me. I just know I have to do it. Maybe it's because I didn't start the education program until my sophomore year. I had an undecided major my freshman year.

Lack of examples, leadership, instruction, and purpose to make it more meaningful. It seems like "busywork" with minimal return on investment.

Finding time to put all of my reflections and artifacts with a competency is frustrating. The initial set up time was also frustrating.

The portfolio in general has caused frustration. The reflections are the part of the portfolio that I do NOT like. I am a very straightforward person and I cannot draw out what I feel into 3 pages. I state what I feel and would like to move on, but several professors say that my reflections should be longer.

The guidelines for putting it together are in a notebook and they are not exactly clear. So when I put my portfolio together it frustrated me because it wasn't clear. Another thing that frustrates me is writing a reflection over your artifacts.

This for sure won't make me a better teacher.

The portfolio says “master” in several areas. I have a problem w/this because I don’t feel I can even begin to master anything until I have been in the classroom for several years.

I feel like it is just busy work and a waste of time.

I go to one instructor and ask a question pertaining[sic] to the portfolio. Then I go to someone else and I am given a different answer.

I don’t know exactly how to start the portfolio. Once I go to a workshop maybe and hopefully I’ll understand better.

How to get it started. What to place in it first.

4. I’ve heard some say that they’ve never used it again. I’m hoping that I’ll use some things from the portfolio, but I’m not far enough into it yet.

I don’t think that it is really useful, especially if I teach in another state.

I might use a couple artifacts for lessons in my classroom, but nothing more than that.

I don’t.

Most likely, little to no use.

I do not think I will use it after graduation.

I have heard from several teachers that once you graduate from the education program, your portfolio is no longer used. Principals and superintendents may not even ask to see it, therefore if they aren’t going to see it, why should I look at it.

I don’t foresee using it. I will throw it away and think about how it was dumb to even have a portfolio. It’s a waste of time.

Good question.

I probably won’t. I don’t plan on teaching in another state, therefore I may or may not need it.

I feel that my portfolio will come into use a lot. I will use it mostly when I begin to teach. Once I become an experienced teacher, I will not need it as much.

Haven’t a clue.

5. That the professors spend more time explaining the process and how they want us to do it. It seems as if they keep what they are looking for a big secret until it is too late.

Have a class designed to help with just the portfolio. It should be somewhat of the faculty’s responsibility to teach us what to do. We need to make sure we really know the stuff we are going to teach, not that we can fill out a portfolio. Rather than portfolio workshops, integrate portfolio construction more within the actual courses that satisfy the competencies.[sic]

Make the process a little less involved.

I think the portfolio would be more fun if the teaching candidate could choose an “x” amount of artifacts that were their favorite and include them and a summary. Then, it might actually be fun to look back and see what you have done.

Don’t have a portfolio system at all! Just let the teachers give us assignments and be done with it.

Not so intense.

I feel that the teachers should explain more about the process and not assume that all students know what they are doing.

Need to have the instructors of education classes do a quick review over the portfolio.

6. I wish that it didn't have to be such a major, mandatory project.

I guess if we have to do them, we should try to have a more positive outlook because everyone including faculty acts like they are the worst things in the world.

It could be a useful technique, but it's not handled, delivered, supported, etc. near to its potential.

I think more hands on time in the classroom would be more beneficial than such an intense emphasis on the portfolio.

I hate it and think it's a waste of time.

I think that there is too much emphasis put on the portfolio, when more of it should be on classroom preparation.

Why does Oklahoma require this and not other states?

3413 Male

1. The pre-service teaching was excellent at NWOSU.

It is very frustrating and insulting to use my time on something so petty.

2. It has allowed me to look back on what I have done in the past.

It has not yet helped me.

3. The setup and what has been considered appropriate for each artifact.

It is frustrating because it's nothing I can use. It seems to me that there are people in education who should not be teachers. Because of this there are mountains of paper work to created standards, but a standard not only brings bad teachers up to par, but also drags down good teachers. Teaching is a gift, not a degree. You can't "earn" it. The related to reflections and the nation-wide education system in general.

4. The portfolio will allow me to understand and cooperate with children better.

When I am a new teacher and have no money it will hold up the northeast corner of my couch.

5. Become more clear on what artifacts are possible for each competency and the reflection process.

I'd rather learn theories and how to apply them than theories and who came up with them.

6. No more objective insight can be given at this time.

Key: 3913

Gender: Female – 9

Male – 6

Age: Female – 17 – 24 – 8

25 or more - 1

Male – 17 – 24 - 6

25 or more - 0

Class: Female – Freshman - 0

Sophomore - 0

Junior - 0

Senior - 9

Male - Freshman – 0

Sophomore – 0

Junior – 0

Senior – 6

Ethnicity: Female

Native American – 0

African American – 0

Latino/Hispanic – 2

Caucasian – 6

Other – 1

Male

Native American – 1

African American – 0

Latino/Hispanic – 0

Caucasian – 5

Other – 0

Cumulative GPA: Female – 3.5 – 4.0 - 4

3.0 – 3.4 - 4

2.5 – 2.9 - 1

Below 2.5 - 0

Male – 3.5 – 4.0 - 2

3.0 – 3.4 - 3

2.5 – 2.9 - 1

Below 2.5 - 0

Major: Female

Secondary English/Language Arts - 1

- 4

Secondary Science - 1

Secondary Social Sciences - 0

Secondary Math

Secondary Health/Physical Ed – 1
Secondary Business - 0
Other – 2 (1 instrumental, 1 not specified)

Male – Secondary English/Language Arts - 0
Secondary Math – 0
Secondary Science - 1
Secondary Social Sciences – 0
Secondary Health/Physical Education – 5
Secondary Business - 0
Other - 0

3913 Female:

1. I hate it.

My overall attitude is that it's a waste of precious time. I understand that it might be helpful later on, however.

I think the process is needless and redundant. If we passed the classes that are required for graduation, then shouldn't that indicate that we know the concepts taught? Why do we have to be essentially graded twice on every project that we do, and by panels[sic] that have different ideas about how things should be done than the classroom teachers.

I think that the portfolio is just busy work for the students. It will probably help me in the future, but from what I've heard people haven't even used them. I think they just want something time consuming for the students to do so they can say the education department is hard. Which it kind of is but the portfolio is just too much.

I think it is a lot of busy work and repetitive.

I think it is good for teachers to do a portfolio, but I also think that sometimes it can be a bit excessive.

I think that the student teaching is going to be really helpful because you get a feel on what is going to be in the future as a teacher.

The pre-service teaching portfolio helps you prepare well for when you are ready to teach.

It is a good way of getting students to organize. With it in hands, we can finally say that we are "ready" for the first day of teaching (only 1st one, because we will never truly be ready; it's just something to begin with).

2. Yes.

It hasn't that I can tell so far.

It really has not. It has only given me a bad attitude about the whole program. Also, the fact that every teacher I have talked to that has gone through the

NWOSU program has told me that they have never used their portfolios. Most of them don't even know where the silly thing is.

I don't really know what purpose the portfolio has had yet.

I think some of the items in it are very useful, such as lesson plans and being able to assemble the thing prepares us for mountains of paperwork.

Honestly, the main thing it helped me do was to learn how to organize.

Is going to help on how to treat students, because every child is different, such as in academics, athletics, exceptionalities, etc.

It hasn't helped me because I have not done one yet. But hopefully it would help to organize lesson plans, assignments, or activities not only when I student teach but when I am actually teaching.

Made me think why I want to teach, outline my goals, make sure I am creative and prepared to present material to the class.

3. I do not keep anything, so I don't have stuff I need for my portfolio. I have had to go through and redo most of my stuff cause no one told me to save stuff. It's not my own work. We have to do it to the specifications of the school and it seems to me that it's more of how the school wants to appear than what the student has actually achieved or learned.

The fact that I don't see much practical use for it in the future. Plus, the whole process is so expensive when you have to buy all the materials to fill all those competencies.

The frustrating part about the portfolio is all the field experience hours. The 30 hours is okay but when we get into the hundreds that is ridiculous[sic]. You're just wasting time because you're[sic] doing the same exact thing all over again.

Then there is the time and money part to the portfolio.

Making sure all the slots are filled, then getting one instructor to approve it only to have "the team" put it down.

The many artifacts and the wording of the competencies. It's difficult to find artifacts that exactly fit the competencies.

Dealing with the field experience hours/Resource papers/Summaries; reflections My hours required for every ed. Class. It is helpful to have the hours required but honestly I don't like to do the reflection and summary.

Deciding which papers from which classes will satisfy which competencies.

4. As a tool for what to do in the classroom. My handbook and lesson plans could be very useful.

I foresee giving to others for a form that they can follow while making their own portfolio.

As a doorstop is the only idea that comes to mind.

I'm sure I will use it if I need too, I did put in all the time and effort.[sics]

I may look back to see how I did certain assignments. I may also look back to get information I don't use every day, such as methods for teaching special students.

I really don't, unless it is to get some ideas for my classroom. But most of the ideas I have didn't come from the stuff I did for my portfolio.

Go back and see some activities I did for my own classroom.

I could probably use some lesson plans, games. I could look back to it and see how I've changed.

5. Start when the freshmen arrive and tell them to keep everything. Make sure everyone has an education advisor to help them along.

I would like them to be more specific to the major. A lot of what I have to do is geared toward elementary or just general education instead of music.

If the program is going to require us to make a portfolio, they should provide all the materials, and the grade from the classroom teacher at the time should be sufficient evidence of mastery.

Not being able to enter a class unless a benchmark, etc is complete. Maybe just have only one artifact per competency. Don't make it such a big deal!

It should be less cumbersome and less redundant.

It is just difficult to do a portfolio and all the work it involves when you take 17 hours per semester.

Decrease field experience hours from 30 to 20 and the required test.

Make the competencies a little more clear and require less observation hours.

6. In the syllabus, lay out assignments w/the competencies so the students know what to put where. Otherwise it is just a big guessing game.

Quit changing everything! Once we get something done, we find out the next year that the rules have changed and we have to start over.

When students have a bad attitude, they cease to want to learn, and no one I have talked to has a positive attitude about the portfolio process.

It's not a bad idea but there is just too much to do, with too much influence on them.

While I understand portfolios are the current trend, I don't like them. I feel our time could be better spent on other things.

I think that there needs to be a class, the semester before you student teach, that is just about your portfolio. In this class, is where all the things you put in to your portfolio will be completed.

Just make sure that teachers can help us with identification of the artifacts for competencies from their classes.

3913 Male

1. I feel it is drawn out too much. I don't understand the point of benchmarks being established when service teachers explain to me that it comes of no use in classroom.

I feel that it is a waste of time. It is time consuming and takes time away from actual experience or learning. I believe that it is just busy work and does not prepare you for teaching.

Sometimes I feel that it is just a burden and busy work, but I can see how it will help you in developing your teaching skills. I think that too much emphasis is put on the portfolio and more needs to be put on other areas.

I really don't know right now. I'm in the middle of doing mine right now. But from other friends that I know, they don't use their portfolio at all. The supt. didn't want to see it, so why make it.

I think that too much emphasis is placed on the portfolios. Let's judge teacher candidates on their teaching abilities and not as much on their ability to organize and create documents for a portfolio that honestly has no real weight further into their professional career.

I believe that the portfolio process is pointless. All it is for students is "busy-work." Nobody likes it and we are forced to do this because of some grant. I believe the students should have a choice if they would like to keep a portfolio or not.

2. It has given me more work and stress for me to obtain information and file data from existing years.

None, actually has made me have negative thoughts toward the education program. It has also taken time away from actually learning.

To be organized, have articles and papers to read upon for information on topics. It really hasn't. It's just one more thing that I have to worry about along with the assignments, and getting ready for state tests.

It has stressed me out and taken up many hours that could've been used in a classroom setting and learning actual teaching methods and styles.

It hasn't!

3. Professors criticizing[sic] my portfolio and explaining to me what's not there or right.

Inconsistency with direction and little guidance on working of portfolio.

Spending too much MONEY on it and time because there is too much pressure put on the student to make a portfolio that I feel most people won't use in their teaching experiences.

The way the thing needs to be perfect. If one little thing is messed up, you have to do it over.

The organization of it. The tabs, benchmarks, artifacts all seem to frustrate me. Everything!! It's "busy-work" that I don't have time for.

4. I probably show it to my principal or administrator and after that stick it in a shelf to collect dust.

Never, because I have not put honest thoughts into it because I put what the reviewers want to see.

One use I do like for portfolio would be using it in job interviews, but besides that I will put mine in a box and most likely never use it. Or I will use it as a door-stop. Like I said in number one, people that I have talked to said they just put theirs up and don't ever use it again.

Maybe in an interview for my first or second job, but let's face it. . .a student could have an awesome portfolio but be the worst teacher in the world while a student with an average portfolio holds the potential to be a great teacher. That

avg. portfolio may never get a chance to develop that potential based on his/her portfolio.

As a door stop, or a coaster.

5. Stick to the basics. Provide needed information to the students and shorten criteria.

More direction on completing portfolio and not as lengthy.

One artifact per competency. Not so much emphasis (you shouldn't be able to not get into a class because you don't meet a benchmark).

They are way to [sic] large. There is to [sic] much stuff to put in it.

Field experiences and actual teaching before graduation. Not necessarily "student teaching" but observe students teaching in schools. Too much emphasis on portfolio!!!

Do away with it, or make some changes (lighten the load)

6. I think portfolio tends to draw some pre-education majors out of the business.

WASTE OF TIME!!!!

I think that it takes time away from learning and to me I see it as busy work.

Major headache.

Appendix I

Compiled Answers to the PAQ - Instructors

Key: Instructor
Gender: Female – 8
Male – 6
Age: Female – 24 – 34 - 1
35-44 – 2
45 – 54 – 5
55 – above - 0
Male – 24 – 34 - 1
35 – 44 - 1
45 – 54 – 1
55 – above – 3
Ethnicity: Female – Native American - 0
African American - 0
Latino/Hispanic - 0
Caucasian - 8
Other - 0
Male - Native American - 0
African American - 0
Latino/Hispanic - 0
Caucasian – 6
Other - 0

Primary Area of Instruction: Female –
Elementary/Early Childhood Education – 4
Secondary Education -0
English/Language Arts - 1
Mathematics - 1
Science -0
Social Sciences -0
Music - 0
Health/Physical Education - 0
Business - 0
Other – 1 (Special Ed; Ed Tech/ Tech Integration)
Other – 1 (Speech and Theatre)
Male
Elementary/Early Childhood Education -0
Secondary Education -0
English/Language Arts -0
Mathematics - 0
Science - 0
Social Sciences - 1
Music - 0

Health/Physical Education - 2

Business - 0

Other – 1 (Elementary/Early Childhood Education and Math)

Other – 2(not specified)

Teachers Female:

1. I think it forces the students to do a lot of busy[work] and appears to be time consuming for the instructors as well. I do not see the value the students get out of it. It should provide adequate data for accreditation reviewers to see that NWOSU is preparing its teachers. I wonder if the burden of preparing a portfolio is keeping some people out of the education field or perhaps driving them to seek alternate certification.

Sometimes I wonder if the results are worth the effort. This is a tedious process. It is one more hoop the students have to complete for their program.

I think the idea behind it is good. The students see it as a “hoop” to jump through. I started very frustrated, but it’s getting better.

Something that can be used to positively reflect on our program as a whole or what students learned from the process. It is something that has to be done, so let’s find the best procedures for all involved.

The folio has gotten easier for the students. It was very difficult in the beginning because so many changes kept happening. The folio does allow the students to reflect on their coursework and its application in the classroom.

Overall, my attitude toward the portfolio is positive in that the portfolio holds great promise for assessing what students can actually DO. One of the best methods for archiving performance is through video tapes, audio tapes, and work samples from actual teaching experiences. The rich array of information provided through artifacts, particularly video taping of teaching episodes and auditory recordings of reflections can not be assessed or archived through paper-pencil tests nor even through Likert-type ratings on teacher observation instruments. The portfolio as an assessment tool is essential for authentic assessment of teaching. I am well aware that my attitude is not representative of the population you are sampling. I realize that students and many faculty believe the portfolio is added work – particularly for student teachers. I on the other hand, believe it should be the ONLY work of student teachers! In my opinion the SOLE purpose of student teaching should be to demonstrate mastery of the Teacher Education Unit’s Program Standards.

2. I am more conscious of providing handouts that help students meet the requirements.

I am more careful to structure my classes around the national standards. I also make time to help students understand the portfolio process.

It takes up class time that could be used for better topics.

Somewhat. I’m more aware of making sure students understand application of standards.

I try to match what I teach with the standards more than I used to. I don’t have projects “just because” any more. It has made me reflect right along with the students about what I’ve learned about the class.

Not particularly because many of the projects I do in the methods class already fit the competencies.

The “portfolio” itself has not affected my teaching methodology. Prior to becoming a university faculty member, I taught in the K-12 environment as a special education teacher and as a “regular” high school English teacher for adjudicated youth identified by the court system as “in need of treatment.” As a special education teacher, my teaching has always been “IEP driven” and my curriculum and teaching has always been “aligned” to goals and objectives (not unlike aligning curriculum and teaching to standards). Assessing strengths and weaknesses, developing long-term goals and short-term objectives, designing instruction (including the selection of methods, strategies and materials) to meet those goals and objectives, and then assessing progress has ALWAYS been the way I taught – beginning with my teacher preparation practicum and field experiences. In my practice, assessment always included: Permanent Products/Anecdotal Records (qualitative data collection)/Observations using – Time Sample, Interval Recording, Event Recording, Latency Recording, Duration Recording/ Group Administered Curriculum Based Assessment (teacher developed)/ Group Administered Criterion Referenced Tests (commercially, state, or district developed)/ Group Administered Standardized Tests (normed nationally)/ Individually Administered Curriculum Based Assessment (teacher developed)/Individually Administered Criterion Referenced Tests (commercially, state, or district developed)/Individually Administered Standardized Tests (nation wide norms)/ As a part of the assessment system, samples of each student’s permanent products were always collected at intervals throughout the year in order to discuss with the IEP review team at the end-of-year IEP review meetings. When I taught “regular” English (as regular as English can be for adolescent-aged child-molesters and murderers) our district adopted “Outcome Based Education.” I embraced the idea of aligning teaching and learning to standards and assessing learning through authentic, performance-based assessment! I redesigned the English curriculum around standards and taught directly to those standards, which were in turn, assessed through written and oral “performances.” When I began to teach at the university level, I incorporated special education practice and OBE into my teaching. The only significant change that occurred once “the portfolio” was required is that I stressed that teacher candidates should KEEP ALL ARTIFACTS from all classes and should take personal responsibility for ensuring that they understood what competency each assessment “task” (assignment) was to address.

3. The lack of consistency. One professor says one thing and another one says something different.

A lack of consistency among expectations for portfolio preparation has been the most frustrating. A lack of clear communication seems to be a problem.

The constant changes – we just learn one way and the committee decides to change it.

Helping students understand how to reflect in-depth. As a new faculty member, I think we need some training. Students were coming to me for help and I didn't have a clue.

Students wanting a very prescriptive set of guidelines, "What do I put under this competency?" Rather than analyzing what would best fit. Also, students who want to do the bare minimum just to get by.

The time it takes to check the portfolios and the education department constant changing of the requirements. Sometimes the changes were not clearly defined. My greatest concern is that the portfolio is not implemented in a manner that adequately assesses individual teacher candidates nor the teacher preparation program. In most cases, individual program areas are NOT designed around standards nor are those courses that are suppose to be addressing NWOUSU's "APPLES" (taken from the Oklahoma General Competencies for Teacher Licensure and Certification). For the most part, courses are still designed from content in text books – NOT standards. Courses that are in the program are, for the most part, the same courses that were in the program 20 years ago and the content of the courses has NOT changed. As a result, the performance assessments of competencies (which result in student demonstrations/artifacts for the portfolio) either do not match the content taught in the course, or the performance assessment associated with a course is not a valid measure for the competency that is "tacked on" to the course syllabus in order to appear to address the mandated competency or competencies. An ancillary concern, is that even if one attempts to align each course within a program to standards, the task is daunting – if not impossible. As I have personally worked to design a truly standards based special education preparation program that addresses CEC/NACTE standards for special education, I have experienced tremendous frustration which probably is NOT unique to the special education program area . . . NACTE standards and review procedures reflect a major change in the approval process. In the past, programs provided evidence that standards were taught primarily by syllabi. During the "good ole' days" it was relatively easy to demonstrate that the standards were taught simply by listing the standards in the syllabi and completing the folio matrix. Under the new system, syllabi are not required. Instead, the program report will contain documentation about the program's assessment system and report candidate data. . .

4. Maybe as part of a Master's Program – though I doubt it. I see very little purpose for the portfolio.

Section one of the portfolio contains the documents that they will need to furnish future schools. Sections 2 – 4 will help them recall what is important in teaching. As a door stop.

Possibly to help fill out applications or maybe interviews. Not much other than that unless the schools start going toward a portfolio review process.

Possibly showing certain artifacts to potential employers, such as lesson plans, case studies, etc., to showcase their abilities. Hopefully, they could transfer the knowledge learned from their experience to tackle any problem they have in their system (standards, performances, etc).

Most students will never use it again other than for a graduation requirement. Many principals do not want to take the time to review it during a job interview. Some students may use a test or lesson plan from the portfolio for use in their classroom.

My VISION is that candidates would use the portfolio as a life-long professional development tool, identifying areas of weakness where additional professional development is needed. I believe that some THINK it should be used to obtain a job as a “showcase” portfolio. This is NOT a valid use of our portfolio; however, there should be aspects of the portfolio that could be used in an interview. I am aware that many faculty continue to be confused about the true purpose of OUR portfolio and do not understand what it is not – it is not a “showcase” portfolio to use to obtain a job, analogous to an artist’s portfolio or model’s portfolio/it is not a stock portfolio/ it is not a developmental portfolio showing growth over time/ it is not even a “best practice” portfolio demonstrating THE BEST practices in the PROFESSION. IT IS AN ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO DESIGNED TO DOCUMENT THAT STANDARDS HAVE BEEN MET. In other words, the portfolio is the means for programs to “provide evidence that the standards are assessed and that candidates perform appropriately on those assessments.”

5. Work on consistency and don’t be so nit picky. Who cares if the binder is white or black or some other color, etc.

Development and use of a scoring guide should help alleviate some inconsistencies in evaluation.

Figure out what you want and stick with it. Have all the faculty on the same page so that students are not told two or more different things.

Better continual emphasis and discussion in all classes.

The work load of evaluating at the different benchmarks to be equally distributed among faculty members. To save time at each benchmark, have a procedure in place that doesn’t require rereading every part of the portfolio each time.

Begin with the design of the program content around the standards – NOT around textbook content. Courses should be designed specifically to address one or two standards ONLY – and the standard(s) should be reflected in the course title. Once the content is organized into standards, identify, as the teacher education unit, one or two major performance tasks associated with each standard. Once each performance task is identified, it should be carefully analyzed to ensure the assessment is valid, reliable, fair, and free from bias. At this time, it is important to also plan to determine reliability over time and instructors – and then follow through! Any faculty (adjunct or full time) should be given training on the standard and assessment in order to increase reliability.

Then, as a teacher education unit, identify specific learning experiences which require the student to actually teach or indirect experiences such as demonstrations, video, readings, lectures. It is most likely going to be impossible to find a single text that fully addresses a standard, however, the majority of the content of a text book SHOULD ADDRESS THE STANDARD!!! Selected readings that augment the content found in the texts should be identified. I believe this should be done as a UNIT – not by one individual faculty member. . . In this sense, the portfolio could be characterized as “developmental” for the

PROGRAM (not for the candidate) because the entire process allows the UNIT to assess the effectiveness of the program.

6. I think students should be encouraged when they are freshmen to start portfolio information. All majors – should start portfolios. All freshmen should obtain information. Whether they are education majors.

Having the artifacts filed and compiled electronically would save much time and effort.

Students are traumatized by the process because no two teachers tell the students the same thing.

I like having many portfolio workshops that we do. Maybe a standardized PowerPoint or something to ensure uniformity of information.

As I've seen portfolios from universities across the state, I've realized that NWOSU's are very complete. They do, however, take a large portion of the students' (and faculty's) time. Is there a compromise we could make to allow more time with students? In this age of accountability, it is good for our students to be able to show what they have learned, and teachers to show what is taught through performance-based activities.

Instructors - Male

1. Overall, I feel it's probably more trouble to the students than it's worth.

Anxiety, confusion.

Allows students to self-reflect along the way – to ID areas/needs for growth.

It is most of the time busy work. I am not sure that it proves mastery of the competency. At best I think it shows understanding not mastery.

The portfolio process has become a major burden for teacher candidates and faculty. What began as a good idea and a useful project has become a reason why good candidates choose other fields. The portfolio process is unclear to most faculty and students that I have been exposed to.

Somewhat negative for much, but not all, meaningless detail.

2. In the teachers' course that I teach, I mention from time to time that this or that will be useful in students' portfolios.

Directs more focus on standards set forth by NCATE.

Don't know yet but causes more focus on competency in class

Significant impact in that assignments need to be in format that will create an artifact.

I am not involved in a Methods Course. I observe student teachers as my only contact with teacher education students.

I pay more attention to teaching requirements and competencies.

3. (1). The rules constantly change, hence confusion. (2). There are various faculty perceptions about what is a good portfolio – hence confusion.

Guidelines for grading or evaluating.

Misunderstanding of expectations.

The size and volume of it and the pressure put on the students at Benchmark #4.

The length of time it takes to sort through and read them. The subjectivity of the standards. Everyone grades them differently.
Language, undue process that has little effect on product.

4. I see no use for it.

References.

Materials to pull from.

They will not.

Most students will never, ever use it again.

Presumably for job interviews and teach skill review – although I don't really think a principal or superintendent will 'wade' through it.

5. If it must be done, we need agreement on how to evaluate it, and the students need to be led through its development in their coursework.

We need to keep the students in mind and what might serve them in their future, not NCATE.

Needs clarification.

I would like to see student requirements decrease. If we could provide students with more "hands-on" experiences before graduation, they would be better prepared. So, I would like to see students spending time on more practical experience and less on paper work.

Brevity, clarity.

6. This is at times pulling my time away from teaching students and class preparation. Governing boards may have too much control over what we are and accomplish. Who do we work for? Students or NCATE?

I would like to see the portfolio process as something separate from the interviews (entrance and exit). I would prefer that portfolio review be done by teacher education faculty in each department (ex. I review H/PE only)

APPENDIX J

Portfolio Scoring Protocol

Candidate	PORTFOLIO SCORING 1					/TCOL				
	Exemplary	Commensurate	Pficient	Marginal	Critical	No Evidence				
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION Mission Statement, Conceptual Framework Personal Philosophy, Professional Goals, Autobiography Credential	5	4	3	2	1	0				
SECTION II: COMPETENCIES										
STUDENTS: LEARNERS AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT										
1. The teacher understands how students learn and instruction and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and physical development at grade levels, including early childhood, elementary, middle level, and secondary.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
2. The teacher understands that students vary in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adaptable to individual differences of learners.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
3. The teacher uses best practices related to motivation and behavior to create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, self-motivation, and active engagement in learning, thus providing opportunities for success.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
4. The teacher understands the process of continuous learning, the concept of making learning enjoyable, and the need for willingness to change when the change leads to greater student learning and development.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
TEACHING: INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT										
5. The teacher plans instruction based upon curriculum goals, knowledge of the teaching/learning process, subject matter, students' abilities and differences, and the community, and adapts instruction based upon assessment and reflection.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
5.1. The teacher understands and is able to develop instructional strategies/plans based on the Oklahoma Core Curriculum.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
6. The teacher understands curriculum integration processes and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills and effective use of technology.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
6.1. The teacher understands the central concepts and methods of inquiry of the subject matter discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of the subject matter meaningful for students.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
7. The teacher develops a knowledge of and uses a variety of communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
8. The teacher understands and uses a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate and modify the teaching/learning process ensuring the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
9. The teacher shall have an understanding of the importance of assessing students with awareness and the application of career concepts to the academic curriculum.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
SCHEDULE: THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT										
10. The teacher evaluates the effects of higher-education and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community), modifies their actions when needed, and adapts their skills opportunities for continue professional growth.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
11. The teacher understands the State teacher evaluation process, "Oklahoma Core for Teaching Performance," and how to incorporate these criteria in designing instructional strategies.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
12. The teacher fosters positive interaction with school colleagues, parents/families, and organizations in the community to actively engage them in support of students' learning and well-being.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
13. The teacher understands the legal aspects of teaching, including the rights of students/parents/families, as well as the legal rights and responsibilities of the teacher.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
14. The teacher researches and analyzes major contemporary problems in public education.	5	4	3	2	1	0				
SECTION III: PRESENTATION										
OF IMPROVEMENT:										
REQUIRED	5	4	3	2	1	0				
NOT REQUIRED										
PLANNING										

NOTE: A rating of Zero (0) in One (1) or more items will result a plan of improvement and a second presentation.

APPENDIX K

Institution Review Board

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 8/25/2004

Date: Tuesday, August 26, 2003

IRB Application No ED0417

Proposal Title: TEACHER EDUCATION PORTFOLIOS: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Principal Investigator(s):

Lisa Holder
716 Locust
Alva, OK 73717

Virginia Worley
716 Locust
Alva, OK 73717

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI :

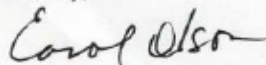
Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 8/25/2004

Date: Thursday, January 29, 2004

IRB Application No: ED0417

Proposal Title: TEACHER EDUCATION PORTFOLIOS: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY
AND PRACTICE

Principal
Investigator(s):

Lisa Holder
716 Locust
Alva, OK 73717

Virginia Worley
255 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact me in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, colson@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Lisa Holder

Candidate for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Dissertation: THE TEACHER EDUCATION PORTFOLIO: AN INSTRUMENT FOR
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' GROWTH?

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Education: Bachelor of Arts Degree: May 1984, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma, Major: English Education. Master of Education: May 1989, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma, Major: English. Completed the requirements for the Doctorate of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in December 2004, Emphasis: English Education.

Credentials: Standard Oklahoma Teaching License, Certificates: 7 – 12 Language Arts – American Literature, English Literature, Grammar and Composition, Newspaper, Speech and Drama, and Yearbook.

Professional Experience: Assistant Professor of Education, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma, August 2002 to present; Education Enhancement Center Coordinator, Northwest Technology Center, Alva, Oklahoma, August 1993 – May 2002; Language Arts Instructor, Alva High School, Alva, Oklahoma, January 1987 – May 1993; Language Arts Instructor, Sharon-Mutual Public Schools, Mutual, Oklahoma, August 1985 – January 1986.

Professional Memberships: Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Oklahoma Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, Phi Delta Kappa, Oklahoma Association of Career/Technical Educators, American Association of Career/Technical Educators, Oklahoma Education Association, National Education Association

Awards and Honors: Pride Award, Oklahoma Association of Career and Technology Education Special Needs Division; Honor Award Recipient to attend Quartz Mountain Arts Institute; Teacher of the Year, Alva High School; Key Club Teacher of the Year, Alva High School.