

DES
REFLECTIVE
PRACTICE PORTFOLIO

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS ACCEPTED IN THE DES TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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What is the Department of Education Teacher Education Portfolio?

- A selectively edited collection of your work, organized in a set of web pages you create, using the online templates provided through UWL Instructional Technology Services.
- A way of documenting your successful completion of the Department of Educational Studies (DES) Teacher Education Program, showing you have met all of the Wisconsin Teaching Education Standards (WTES) at an initial certification level.
- A showcase of your developing knowledge, skill and dispositions in teaching related to the WTES.

What belongs in it?

- Your Educational Philosophy and Resume.
- Rationales (reflective practice writing) introducing every artifact and addressing each of the 10 WTES.
- Artifacts (pieces of evidence) you have created or collected--not limited to assignments in the TEP, but inclusive of any activity that has prepared you to be a teacher during the time you have been enrolled in our program--volunteer work, coaching, camp counseling, attendance at conferences are acceptable artifacts along with course projects.
- Field experience evaluations, all cooperating teacher evaluations and supervisor evaluations must be included.

What are the specific requirements of UWL's DES Teacher Education Portfolio?

- DES's Teacher Education Portfolio is based on the Wisconsin Teacher Educator Standards (WTES), just as our program is designed to give you opportunities to meet these same Standards. The artifacts you choose should show your progress in meeting each of the WTES.
- Your portfolio is a developmental portfolio; therefore, you must demonstrate **growth and development** in each of the WTES over time.
- Your artifact and rationale should relate clearly and directly to the knowledge, skills and dispositions of the WTES addressed.
- Every artifact must be introduced by a rationale. Rationales must meet requirements for descriptive, analytical, grammatical, and reflective writing.
- Field experience evaluations, all cooperating teacher evaluations and supervisor evaluations must be included.

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How will my Portfolio change over my time in the TEP? When is it finished?

- **Pre-Block:** An introduction to the Wisconsin Teacher Standards and an explanation of the portfolio will be provided. You will begin collecting artifacts, writing rationales, and organizing your evidence. You will be expected to compile a minimal number (1 or more, but not all 10) of artifacts during this introductory semester. You will open and begin your e-portfolio and upload your Educational Philosophy (developed as a course requirement).
 - Between the pre-program block and Student Teaching, professors throughout DES should help you identify appropriate artifacts from individual courses that meet the WTES.

- **Field I:** Prior to the end of Field Experience I, you must have a minimum of one artifact for each of the 10 Standards, or ten artifacts with their accompanying rationales. You will be working with your field instructor and advisor on this process.
 - Each standard's rationale must be read, evaluated and signed by your Field I Instructor, Academic Advisor or DES faculty member.
 - Each rationale and artifact, plus your Field I assessments, and resume should be uploaded into your e-portfolio.
 - A Professional Reflection Plan (PRP) will be developed during this semester and must be uploaded in to your e-portfolio.

- **Field II:** Prior to the end of Field Experience II, you must have revised and/or written each of the 10 rationales and have added 10 new artifacts demonstrating further understanding and application of each standard as a developmental process. You will be working with your Field II instructor and Academic Advisor on this process and each standard's rationale must be read and signed off on by your Field II Instructor or Academic Advisor.
 - Each revised and/or new rationale and new artifact must be read, evaluated and signed by your Field II Instructor, Academic Advisor or a DES faculty member.
 - Each rationale and artifact, plus your Field II assessments, and updated resume should be uploaded into your e-portfolio.
 - A second PRP, addressing your needs for further enhancement in your teaching, will be developed during this semester and must be included with your e-portfolio.

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- **Student Teaching:** During your time as a student teacher you will design and directly deliver a teaching unit. Prior to completion of Student Teaching demonstration of growth and development related to the 10 standards will be shown through this unit of study (the unit of study becomes your artifact for all 10 WTES).
 - A rationale that clearly identifies growth and development in the use of all 10 WTES through a designed and implemented unit is required.

Collecting Artifacts

What is an "Artifact" in the DES Teacher Education Portfolio?

- An artifact is a piece of evidence that shows what you know about the subject(s) you teach OR what you know about teaching OR what teaching activities you have done.
- Artifacts take many different forms – they may include but are not limited to the following list:
 - Lesson plans
 - Unit plans
 - Teaching materials you created such as handouts, quizzes, puzzles, games, and manipulatives
 - Videotapes of you teaching
 - Captioned photos of you teaching or assisting students as they work
 - Captioned photos of student work displays you arranged
 - Captioned photos of instructional bulletin boards you created
 - Photocopied or original samples of student work you assigned (with last names erased or whited out to maintain confidentiality--first names are fine and lend authenticity to the sample)
 - Your best assignments from college courses, especially in your major and the DES Teacher Education Program
 - Academic awards
 - Volunteer recognition certificates
 - Thank you letters from parents
 - Letters of recommendation
 - And so forth (discuss further with your field and/or academic advisor)!!

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Tips/suggestions for Collecting Artifacts

- Save all college assignments and keep them organized for easy access and review.
- Keep a disposable camera (or periodically take your digital camera) at your field experience site. (*This is only a suggestion and must have all permissions granted before taking pictures.*) Have your Cooperating Teacher take photos of you working with students, then, have them developed as digital files. You may need to seek parental and/or permission to use photos of your students. Your e-portfolio is on a secure server, and only those you choose to share it with can access your portfolio; therefore, the photos will not be available to the general public.
- Arrange to be videotaped during student teaching--ask your Cooperating Teacher, Field Supervisor or a fellow Student Teacher. If possible, use a digital video camera, so you can upload the entire video, or video segments, into your e-portfolio. Short video segments make the most effective artifacts.
- Make copies of significant student work. Be sure your samples represent the full range of student ability levels you taught. Alter the samples so that only first names are visible (professional confidentiality).
- Write reflections about lessons ASAP after teaching. What have you learned? What will you do differently if you get to teach the same lesson or a similar lesson again? What have you learned that applies to teaching in general? These will serve as notes for creating your rationale analysis.

Study the Wisconsin Teacher Education Standards

- Read and frequently review the Standards, especially the document titled *Standards in Practice*.
- Preferably with a peer group of TEP students, brainstorm a list of possible artifacts for each standard. Mark which ones you already have and which ones you still need to create.
- Monitor your own progress in meeting the WTES, and continue to look for weak areas while you have time left in the TEP to create more artifacts.

Sort and File Your Artifacts As You Collect Them

- Place possible artifacts in appropriate sections. - Example: Rubrics and Tests usually belong under Standard #8, Teachers Know How To Test for Student Progress.
- Cross reference artifacts with multiple standards as appropriate.

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Writing Reflective Practice Rationales

What is a Rationale?

- A "rationale," as used when referring to portfolios, is a short essay that introduces an artifact. In a standards-based developmental portfolio, such as you are composing for UWL's DES Teacher Education Program, the purpose of each rationale is to help the reader see the connection of the Artifact related to your progress in meeting the Wisconsin Professional Teaching Standards (WTES).

- Each rationale should contain four elements or components--
 1. A heading naming the standard and the artifact;
 2. A description of the artifact, including contextual details (the how, when, where and why the artifact was chosen and the contents of the artifact);
 3. An analysis of how it relates to the standard and how effective the strategy or plan was in the given context (it will be beneficial to review the subcomponents under each standard);
 4. A reflection of what you learned from creating the artifact (that is, from delivering the lesson, collecting the resources, trying the strategies, and so forth) and how you will use what you've learned in future teaching situations (generalized, showing your growth in the Standard, not, for instance, how you will use the particular lesson).

How to Write Rationales

- Use first person, singular case. Your DES Teacher Education Portfolio is about you, and showcases your skills and experience, so the use of "I" is appropriate, and more direct than other constructions.

- Your primary audience is college professors in the DES TEP. You should use professional terms correctly, but avoid assuming your audience interprets them exactly as you do.

- Begin by describing the Artifact, adding contextual information that supplements what is obvious from looking at the Artifact itself. In other words, if it is a lesson plan, you should describe at what level in the TEP you created this lesson, some characteristics of the students you actually taught or the purpose of the assignment if you did not get to teach it, some of your reasons for deciding on the instructional methods and materials you used, and the setting in which you taught.

- Use the actual language of the WTES subcomponents you feel is most clearly related to the Artifact. Show that you understand the language you've quoted by elaborating on

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exactly how your Artifact fulfills the indicator. You will need to be very familiar with the WTES, and know what they mean, in order to do this.

- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Artifact, or your own performance. For example, if the Artifact is a lesson you taught, describe how the students responded, and how well they achieved your objectives.
- Reflect on the potential of the Artifact for your future teaching. What have you learned related to the Standard this Artifact is evidence for? Write how you will incorporate what you've learned into your future teaching style, whether you will use similar strategies, techniques, or procedures, and why.
- Begin by writing at least one paragraph for each of the three main elements or components--Description, Analysis, and Reflection. Reread later and add details. Analysis is usually the longest section. Receive feedback from your DES Teacher Education Program instructors and discipline instructors on the quality of your writing, and edit your rationales repeatedly. This Portfolio should represent your very best work, including every rationale.

Characteristics of Good Rationales

- They are brief and concise, not first draft writing. "Omit needless words and phrases."
- The description of the Artifact should be specific and accurate, well grounded in the real process of your creation. Give enough significant details to make your audience want to examine your Artifact more closely, but don't duplicate what you have written, or what is seen, in the Artifact itself.
- The analysis should be thorough, well developed, and honest. As well as using the language of the WTES indicator(s), you should put the strengths and weaknesses into your own words. Keep your tone and style direct. Discuss how the initial choices you made in creating your Artifact had positive and negative results. Admit your mistakes, and discuss what you learned from them. *It is okay to make a mistake. It is the growth and development you acquire as a result of the mistake that is important.*
- The reflection should be thoughtful, specific, and should emphasize the positive change you have experienced in your teaching ability as a result of creating the Artifact. This is the most important part of your Rationale for showing your developing abilities as a teacher. Do not simply state you will use it in the future, but state how and/or why you would try this again.