

## ePortfolio as a Measure of Reflective Practice

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This instructional article outlines the qualities of effective ePortfolios and how reflection and student growth is measured. Student exemplars and assessment rubrics show how, despite changing tools and evolving standards, sustained collaboration and student coaching yields reflective practitioners in content areas and in technological knowledge. As part of summative assessment within a teacher preparation program, teacher candidates prepare an ePortfolio to demonstrate reflective practice and growth in learning across their arts and humanities programs (e.g., within the Music K-12, History and Social Sciences 6-12, and English 6-12 teacher licensure programs). This article illustrates the importance of privileging meta-cognitive practices that facilitate student ownership of their own learning and growth. Used not as compilation of artifacts, ePortfolios are instead positioned as a pedagogical space where teaching and learning are as transparent as possible. As such, ePortfolios examples and practices are exemplified and discussed within the pedagogical content knowing and technological pedagogical content knowledge frameworks.

### ePortfolio as a Measure of Reflective Practice

Support for electronic portfolio (ePortfolio) use in higher education has increased over the past decade due to calls for greater accountability concerning student learning; ePortfolios' perceived promise to provide long-term storage for student work beyond the scope of their college careers; and the authentic and holistic assessment opportunities that a well-structured ePortfolio process can provide (Watson & Doolittle, 2011). As Watson and Doolittle (2011) explained, "what makes an ePortfolio [effective] . . . is the pedagogy within which the ePortfolio is embedded" (p. 30). Within this article, we will describe how three different teacher preparation programs collaborate in their use of ePortfolio to amplify pedagogical choices and to encourage and assess reflective practice. Within any university program, encouraging reflective practice is important to preparing thinking practitioners who show that they can adapt to new technologies, new standards, and new environments. Set within the context of our (a) discipline-specific national standards, (b) the need to prepare digital pedagogies for 21st century classrooms, (c) National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE, now CAEP) and state teacher education standards, and (d) a recognition that learning to teach is a socially constructed process of self-organization and enculturation, ePortfolios have emerged as a capstone experience wherein teacher educators support and assess students' learning and development as they undertake their journey to the other side of the desk, from student to teacher. Collaborative work with ePortfolios in English, music, and history and social science education programs has emerged over the last decade as a signature pedagogy through which students are prepared to be reflective teaching practitioners and demonstrate reflective habits and behaviors. While faculty and platforms have changed, our programmatic

work with ePortfolios has been sustained, refined, and aligned across changing technologies and faculty attrition. Beginning in 2007, our programs have undergone a sustained self-study of our processes and requirements to facilitate student reflective practice. A key emphasis of our efforts has been to identify ways for our student practitioners to use the networked space of the ePortfolio itself and their public ePortfolio defense to present the case that in their journey from student to teacher, they have become capable of engaging in the type of reasoning that Aristotle referred to as *phronesis*; the deliberative reflective reasoning required of expert curriculum decision-makers that weaves together theory, context, and practice (Aristotle, 1976; Fenstermacher, 1994). This instructional article describes how ePortfolios have been theoretically and practically conceptualized, integrated, and sustained within, and through, the teaching and learning environments across programs; and how our work with ePortfolio integration has evolved to create the opportunity and space for our students to publicly demonstrate and reflect upon their learning and growth.

### Teaching and Learning Environments: ePortfolio Use to Capture and Document Forms of Student Teacher Pedagogical Knowledge

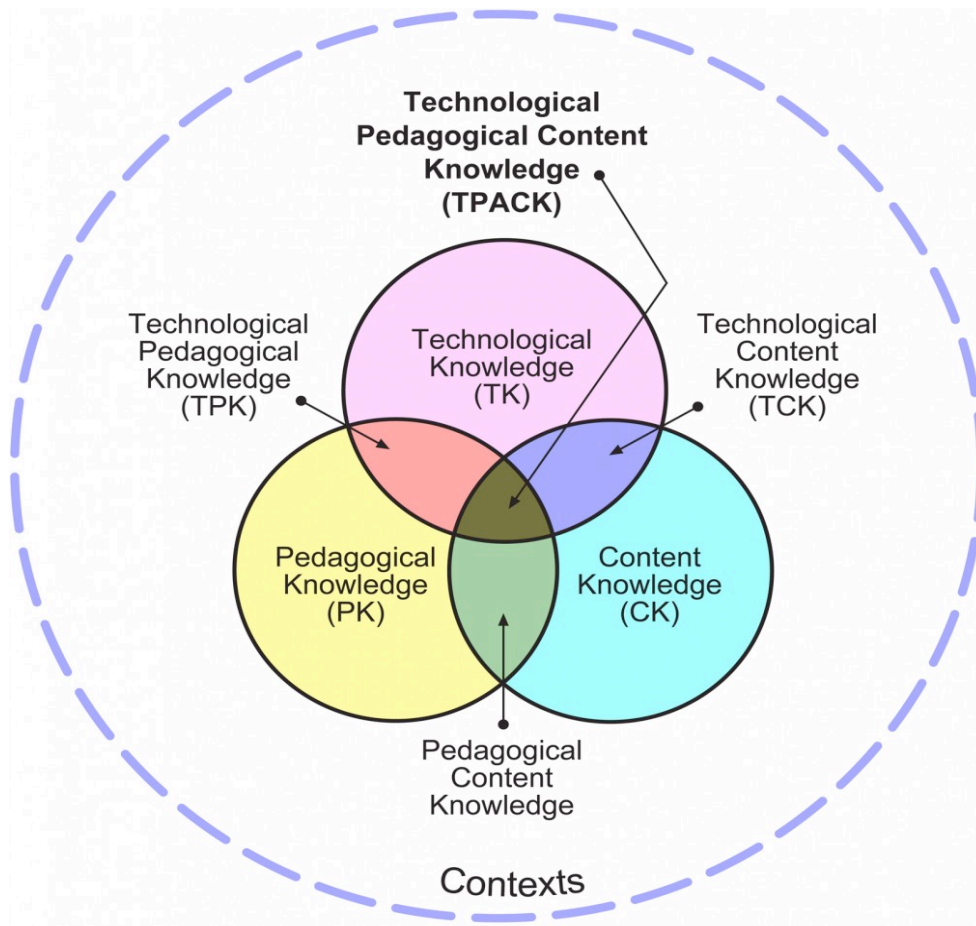
Over the last decade, ePortfolios have become an important tool and instructional scaffold providing our students with the opportunity to craft and present an evidence-based, professional account of their emerging knowledge, skills, and dispositions as self-aware, reflective beginning teachers of not simply content, but also of children in today's 21st century classrooms. EPortfolios have emerged as a way for students to begin to capture and illuminate the often elusive, ethereal, and context-specific complexities of knowledge growth in teaching, in terms of their emerging *pedagogical content knowing* (PCKg), as

referenced by Shulman (1986, 1992) and Cochrane, DeRuiter, and King (1993); and *technological pedagogical content knowledge* (TPACK) as referenced by Mishra and Koehler (2006; see Figure 1). PCKg, as defined by Cochran et al. (1993), is a teacher’s emerging “integrated understanding of . . . pedagogy, subject matter content, student characteristics, and the environmental context of learning. PCKg development is continual” (p. 266). PCKg is the conflation of learning theory, individualized instruction, and content area knowledge. It is one thing to know the conventions of a particular field, but domain-specific pedagogical knowledge is the understanding of how to teach it. TPACK, as described by Koehler (2011), emerges from the construct of PCKg and reveals the intersecting foundational forms of knowledge necessary for the appropriate and authentic integration of technology to support teaching and learning in 21st century classrooms. As Kilbane and Milman (2003) explained,

Digital teaching portfolios are one of the best ways for teachers to communicate the level of their knowledge and skill within educational technologies. The increasing role of technology in learning environments makes the demonstration of technology competence more important now than ever before. Teachers who create portfolios in this way demonstrate their knowledge of hardware, software, and the integration of the two for the purpose of creating useful educational tools. Although the process of making traditional teaching portfolios helps teachers examine their competence and chart their future growth as professionals, the creation of digital teaching portfolios also provides them the opportunity to think more seriously about how their career will be affected by the role of technology in the classroom and society. (p. 6)

Developing an understanding of the nature and forms of knowledge growth in teacher education begins

Figure 1  
*Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge*



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with the recognition that the ability to reflect on and in action is what defines the profession of teaching (Schön, 1987). Teachers are professionals and not technicians. Shulman (1986) noted:

The professional holds knowledge, not only of how—the capacity for skilled performance—but of what and why. The teacher is not only a master of procedure but also of the content and rationale, and capable of explaining why something is done. The teacher is capable of reflection leading to self-knowledge, the metacognitive awareness that distinguishes draftsman from architect, bookkeeper from auditor. A professional is capable not only of practicing and understanding his or her craft, but of communicating the reasons for professional decisions and actions to others. (p. 13)

ePortfolio construction and the subsequent public defense presentation provides students with a medium to reflect on and share their experiences across their graduate program and to create a contextually aware, evidence-based case of their developing professional selves from which to look forward into their future careers.

### **Conceptualizing, Integrating, and Scaffolding the Process to Support Student Learning**

Over the years, we have learned that not all ePortfolios are equal. What is often lost in the rush to use digital technologies to foster and assess student learning is an understanding that an ePortfolio is not simply a storage site, database, electronic scrapbook, or simplistic archival collection of students' accumulated course work over their university career. Rather, an ePortfolio goes beyond simply collecting and storing artifacts toward leveraging digital technologies' potential to make unique linkages, connections, and reflections among multiple experiences and artifacts in ways that would not otherwise be possible with a traditional paper portfolio. The ability to select artifacts and make links among standards, learning principles, experiences, and beliefs provides students with the opportunity and virtual space to develop layers of reflections that set their past, present, and future in direct tension as they seek to explain and unpack how their ongoing pedagogical decisions and activities influence and shape their own students' growth.

Helping students understand the nature and purpose of the ePortfolio process is vital and begins early in their program. Students are provided with an orientation to the process within their first semester and given examples of exemplary ePortfolios from previous years. Additionally, a vital part of the orientation begins with the end in sight (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Each

incoming cohort of students is invited to the ePortfolio defenses of the current cohort as a way to not only show the process but also make the ePortfolio presentation a visible scholarly event that is open to a community of peers. Each cohort also has access to previous cohorts' portfolios, as all are public, and these are examined and unpacked within the methods courses as a way to provide examples and non-examples of strong professional reflective portfolios. Students are also provided with our ePortfolio assessment rubric (e.g., see Appendix A) so that they can begin to develop an understanding of the types of acceptable and appropriate evidence and indicators of their knowledge growth that might be layered within and through their reflective ePortfolio. The evaluation rubric of ePortfolios is modeled upon the themes and principles from the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), discipline specific National Standards from the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Council for the Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Association for Schools of Music (NASM), the standards from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and state standards.

Upon working with students to help them identify desired results and determine acceptable evidence, the foundation is set for beginning the yearlong process of designing experiences and supporting assignments to help students in the ePortfolio construction and presentation process. Coursework and instruction are aligned so that students can follow four umbrella steps in creating their ePortfolios:

1. **Collect:** Throughout the year students learn the importance of collecting and saving artifacts from coursework across their programs and from their field experiences as potential sources of evidence to help illuminate the process of learning to teach, or in other words, their growth in terms of their knowledge, skills, and disposition as they negotiate and reflect upon their journey to the other side of the desk.
2. **Select:** Collecting the artifacts is simply the first stage; our students are then expected to develop a critical, evaluative, and inferential lens through which to make decisions regarding which key artifacts can serve as the most appropriate and meaningful evidence of their growth from student to teacher.
3. **Reflect:** Working with the concepts of critical incidents or well-remembered events, students begin to construct slices of evidence-based narrative reflections that describe how their experiences have influenced their transformation from content specialist to content teacher.

4. **Connect:** Students begin to look for associations and points of connection among their experiences, reflections, artifacts, and standards in order to construct and present a “portrait” of themselves as a beginning teacher who (a) is committed to all students, (b) knows the subject and how to teach the subject, (c) is responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, (d) can think systematically about their practices and learn from experiences, and (e) is an active member of a learning community.

We evaluate their ePortfolios for evidence of these five components. We believe that reflection is at the heart of the ePortfolio, as it most clearly shows us what our students think about what they are learning. Reflecting means being intentionally thoughtful about defining an experience, explaining that experience, and determining future implications and actions. Through explanations and demonstrations of model ePortfolios from past cohorts we seek to provide students with generative ideas for how to approach the iterative collect, select, reflect, and connect process. This level of pedagogical support reveals the porous nature of our methods classrooms, as students in each program meet with each other to discuss the nature of the ePortfolio and also to learn about the institutional networks of support that exist through campus technology support. By initially populating their matrix with artifacts/evidence that they *collect* over the year, they then *select* what they consider to be the most appropriate pieces for their portfolio, *reflect* on why these are important in illustrating their journey, and finally, find ways to *connect* their evidence based accounts and reflections together (see Gibson & Barrett, 2003). This process, we believe, allows our students the opportunity to work with “multiple forms of evidence” (Penny-Light, Chen, & Itelson, 2012, p. 61) to convey within a strong ePortfolio the depth of their understanding, their ways of knowing, and how they feel about their readiness to assume a teaching position.

In addition to the big picture strategies of supporting collection, selection, reflection, and connection, we also provide instruction and support at a more focused and disciplinary-specific scale. For while we teach the same methods and field internship courses, our students come from distinct disciplinary content areas (e.g., music, history and social studies, and English). Because our programs are sequenced, our students take these classes across the year, and we have aligned our general and disciplinary specific assignments and capstone projects deliberately and purposefully within our courses for the benefit of the students’ learning. By embedding tasks in the coursework and field experiences, we plan for students

to create the many artifacts that they will need. They are then able to select from these assignments the artifacts that they will reflect on and connect together in their ePortfolio. Students are able to make individual choices about their selections. We evaluate the many reflective tasks required to help students increase their level of critical thinking (e.g., in the blogs that they contribute to for the field class). Experiences within the courses that illustrate this are shown in Table 1.

### **Artifacts Supporting Reflective Practice in ePortfolios**

As shown in Table 1, students collect artifacts to share in ePortfolios, and these show student reflection at different places within their program of learning: daily, weekly, and after units, courses, and programs of study. Artifacts, including tweets, video collages, vlogs, and blogs, show incremental reflection on learning that, when synthesized in an ePortfolio, demonstrate student development over time.

#### **Twitter/Tweets**

Tweets, in particular, show how students not only synthesize their learning in 140 characters or less, but it also connects them with a professional learning network beyond their university cohort. Teacher candidates tweet reflections bi-weekly as collaborative professional development. Tweets illustrate how a candidate might be feeling, acting, or thinking as a teacher—this often includes how they operationalize their beliefs in actions. This is also an important practice in students’ creation of a professional digital footprint. Students situate themselves as professionals in their public displays of learning. For example, Josh Thompson, a preservice teacher in the English Education program, reflected in his ePortfolio (<https://sites.google.com/a/vt.edu/josh-thompson-english-education-eportfolio/community-of-practice>) that Twitter allowed him to maintain weekly contact with members of his learning cohort and also enabled him to follow leaders in the field of English Education. Thompson explained that he was able to “see trends in the field of English Education as well as ways to meaningfully incorporate technology into my classroom” (<https://sites.google.com/a/vt.edu/josh-thompson-english-education-eportfolio/community-of-practice>). Cohort members shared ideas, asked for help, and were able to be less isolated in their internship experiences because of short Tweets (e.g., see <https://twitter.com/search/realtime?q=vtenged13&src=typd>) that could be easily checked on phones or student home pages. The screen shot shown in Figure 2 shows how a shared public hashtag can provide a way for students to connect with each other, ask questions,

Table 1  
*Course Assignments with Program Teaching and Learning Environments*

|                                   | Fall<br>EDCI 5724<br>Methods class 1   | Fall<br>EDCI 5964<br>Field Studies  | Spring<br>EDCI 5744<br>Methods class 2  | Spring<br>EDCI 5754<br>Internship student<br>teaching  |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Selected examples across programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum planning<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Assess student learning<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Teacher work sample website<sup>3</sup></li> <li>Case studies of students with special needs<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Journal review<sup>5</sup></li> <li>Petcha Kutchu 20x20 presentation<sup>6</sup></li> <li>Digital internship, wiki collaboration<sup>7</sup></li> <li>10 NCSS themed Lesson plans.</li> <li>Lesson Study: Micro-teaching reflections on practice<sup>8</sup></li> <li>Educational autobiography and Teaching Metaphor</li> <li>This I believe video</li> <li>Literacy, Language and Inquiry essay review</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations<sup>8</sup></li> <li>Reflective blogs<sup>9</sup></li> <li>Lesson plans<sup>10</sup></li> <li>Discussion audit<sup>11</sup></li> <li>Unit deconstruction collaboration</li> <li>Student shadowing<sup>12</sup></li> <li>Synthesis vlog</li> <li>Classroom and teacher observations</li> <li>Prior Knowledge Interviews</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit plans<sup>13</sup></li> <li>Budget project<sup>13</sup></li> <li>Travel project<sup>13</sup></li> <li>Ning collaboration</li> <li>Lesson Study: Micro-teaching reflections on practice</li> <li>Measuring student growth Teaching Reasoning through Writing</li> <li>Research project and video</li> <li>Focus on student learning<sup>14</sup></li> <li>Using digital technologies to support student learning analysis</li> <li>Action research project and video presentation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective Vlogs</li> <li>Video collages<sup>15</sup></li> <li>Reflection-for-action tweets<sup>16</sup></li> <li>Teaching videos<sup>17</sup></li> <li>Lesson plans<sup>18</sup>;</li> <li>Curriculum mapping project</li> </ul> |
| What the course leads to          | Leads to meta reflection in ePortfolio   | Leads to meta reflection in ePortfolio  | Leads to meta reflection in ePortfolio  | Leads to meta reflection in ePortfolio   |

Note. <sup>1</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele\\_wildts\\_eportfolio-May-2012/III\\_Teaching\\_professionally\\_Professional\\_and\\_Peda](https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele_wildts_eportfolio-May-2012/III_Teaching_professionally_Professional_and_Peda)

<sup>2</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele\\_wildts\\_eportfolio-May-2012/IV\\_Student\\_Learning\\_Assessment](https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele_wildts_eportfolio-May-2012/IV_Student_Learning_Assessment)

<sup>3</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/danielupton\\_ArchiveMay2012/IV\\_Student\\_Learning\\_Assessment](https://vt.digication.com/danielupton_ArchiveMay2012/IV_Student_Learning_Assessment)

<sup>4</sup> <https://scholar.vt.edu/osp-presentation-tool/viewPresentation.osp?sakai.tool.placement.id=c2d3d432-2c3b-4fb1-80d3-18fe4c93475b&id=59678435F6EECF9E2359937181028A75&pageNumber=2>

<sup>5</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele\\_wildts\\_eportfolio-May-2012/I\\_Music\\_Content\\_Knowledge](https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele_wildts_eportfolio-May-2012/I_Music_Content_Knowledge)

<sup>6</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/shaunadamseportfolio/media#page-comments>

<sup>7</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/marileahshowalter/community-of-practice>

<sup>8</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele\\_wildts\\_eportfolio-May-2012/II\\_Teaching\\_Music\\_Pedagogical\\_content\\_knowledge\\_a](https://vt.digication.com/Wildt-ariele_wildts_eportfolio-May-2012/II_Teaching_Music_Pedagogical_content_knowledge_a)

<sup>9</sup> <http://teacherjumper.wordpress.com/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/Postman-nathan\\_postmans\\_eportfolio-May-2012/III\\_Teaching\\_professionally\\_Professional\\_and\\_Peda](https://vt.digication.com/Postman-nathan_postmans_eportfolio-May-2012/III_Teaching_professionally_Professional_and_Peda)

<sup>11</sup> [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1j-vo0YTKAfnXmBCEtyfP5\\_x4ZMLJnUiPLN8o89x8bCg/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1j-vo0YTKAfnXmBCEtyfP5_x4ZMLJnUiPLN8o89x8bCg/edit)

<sup>12</sup> <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GzYpVjz3NpFDamOnLHjyrom6eJctApV8UCWFGxnEjqw/edit#https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GzYpVjz3NpFDamOnLHjyrom6eJctApV8UCWFGxnEjqw/edit>

<sup>13</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/danielupton\\_ArchiveMay2012/III\\_Teaching\\_Professionally\\_Professional\\_and\\_Peda](https://vt.digication.com/danielupton_ArchiveMay2012/III_Teaching_Professionally_Professional_and_Peda)

<sup>14</sup> <https://scholar.vt.edu/osp-presentation-tool/viewPresentation.osp?sakai.tool.placement.id=&id=835ED102FF8CD339FF547E6715E3F8CB&pageNumber=4>

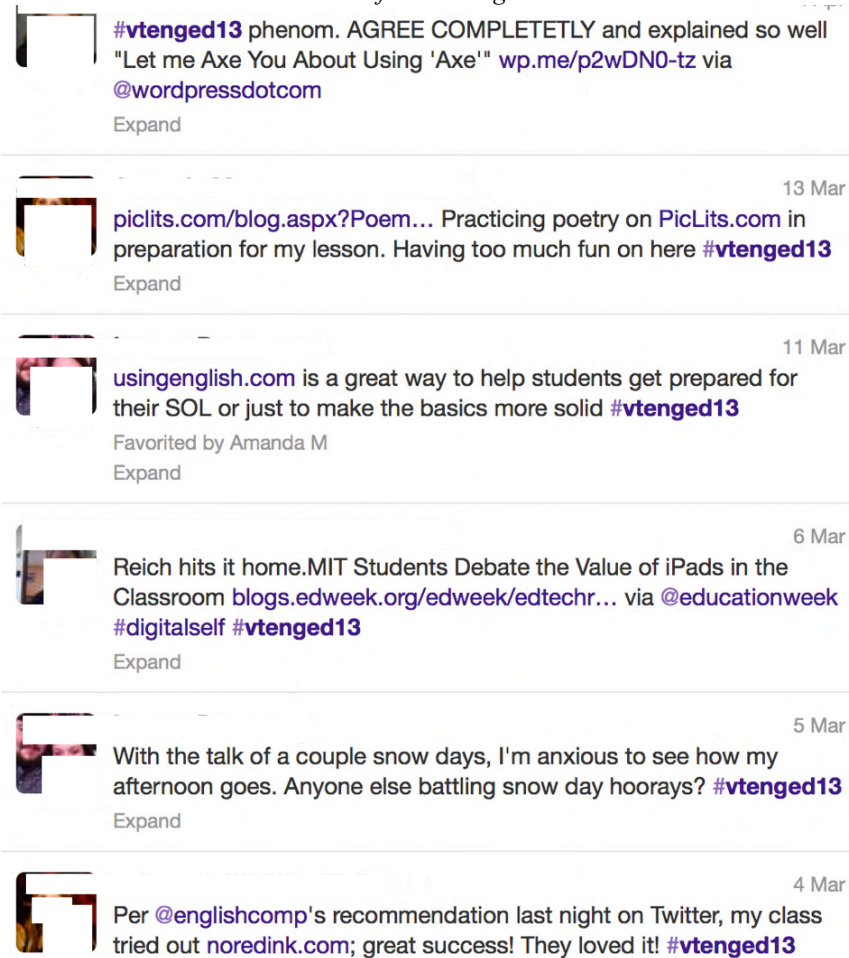
<sup>15</sup> [https://vt.digication.com/danielupton\\_ArchiveMay2012/IV\\_Student\\_Learning\\_Assessment](https://vt.digication.com/danielupton_ArchiveMay2012/IV_Student_Learning_Assessment)

<sup>16</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/emilyreedlove/community-of-practice-1>

<sup>17</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/shaunadamseportfolio/unpacking-practice>

<sup>18</sup> <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3IN3PuDF7nYUnR3TXlob20yU1E/edit>

Figure 2  
Tweets from #vtenged13



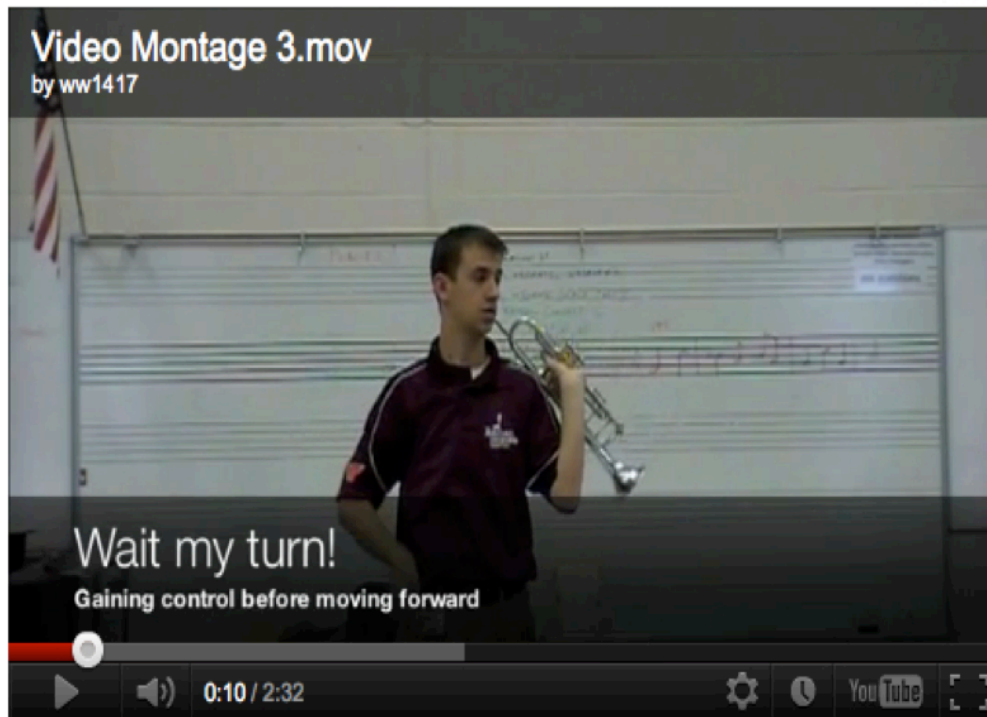
share ideas, and garner support. Effective use of public tweets includes a professional online persona and positive reflection that results in changes in practice that then are manifested in classroom practice. The challenges students overcome as they monitor their own improvement in practice in the classroom are minimized. Students do not need to wait for a supervisor or Clinical Teacher to tell them what needs improving; they learn quickly from the collage videos the areas that need improvement. As Kelsey, a pre-service teacher in Music Education, suggests, "I could do big but really needed to work on small" in terms of non-verbal gesture in the music classroom; the emphasis is on her own self-assessment and her advice to herself for improvement.

### Video Collages

Video collages, also called montages (see Figure 3), show students' reflection on their growth over time. Students take data on their work in the form of video and create a montage of scenes that make

explicit their personal growth over time. The video is a short, three-minute reflection of their growth in a focused area across one month. The way these clips of teaching across each month are put together shows how students reflect on practice in their teaching. For example, Kelsey, a music education student, included a video collage ([https://vt.digication.com/Lund-kelsey\\_lunds\\_eportfolio-May-2013/My\\_Goals](https://vt.digication.com/Lund-kelsey_lunds_eportfolio-May-2013/My_Goals)) to show her growth in the process of musical conducting. She shows a video of herself teaching early in her internship and writes, "After watching these videos, I understand why students always play forte [loud]. In the next two [video] clips, I told the classes to start piano [soft]. Unfortunately, my pattern size doesn't match my request." (e.g., see bottom of Student Learning [Assessment] page, in [https://vt.digication.com/Lund-kelsey\\_lunds\\_eportfolio-May-2013/Contact](https://vt.digication.com/Lund-kelsey_lunds_eportfolio-May-2013/Contact)). Working on something as specific as pattern size in the teaching of music and reflection on this growth in a video collage together demonstrate how an ePortfolio can use the affordances of multimedia displays to create an

Figure 3  
*Video Collage*



effective place for reflection. In assessing such reflection, we look for changes in practice that are seen by the students, so that we are supporting and nurturing dispositions of reflection and thoughtfulness that students, once they have left our programs, will take into their first professional teaching positions.

### Weekly Blogs and Vlogs

In order to have benchmarks of reflective practice, students use blogs to connect with university supervisors and faculty and their own cohort. Through these blogs and vlogs, students measure their own growth one week at a time (see Figure 4). Teacher candidates reflect weekly via vlog (i.e., video logs) and blog (i.e., web logs as text) posts as a way to unpack their practice and to support other teacher candidates. Some candidates comment on the pages of other candidates, widening the professional learning community and deepening their own knowledge. The students are given a choice as to when they wish to create a video log (i.e., a talking head video recounting their week's progress) or a blog post (i.e., a written text piece recounting their week's progress). In previous research, we found that giving students a choice of which modality they chose to reflect improved their level of reflective practice (Kajder &

Parkes, 2012). While the weekly blogs/vlogs can stand alone as evidence of reflective practice, we have found that as part of the ePortfolio creation process students revisit their posts and treat them as relational artifacts/narrative records that can be connected thematically and then re-connected in different ways—often alongside other artifacts such as lesson plans, and student work—to demonstrate challenges that have been overcome and those yet to be overcome, and/or growth over time within specific areas of their teaching. For example, students have taken individual posts created throughout the year to then illustrate and make sense of their emerging abilities to (a) use digital technologies to support the teaching and learning process, (b) manage and monitor student learning, (c) design and implement standard-based units and lesson plans, and (d) implement specific learning strategies to support student learning.

Often students would use their blogs as a space to share the provenance of their activities, reflect on the implementation of their activities, and detail lessons learned for the future. In his ePortfolio presentation, Ben initially acknowledged his initial reluctance to blog/vlog as an assignment and only saw its value as a space to capture his experiences and as a reflective tool as he moved through the year:



Figure 4  
*BLogging and Vlogging*

Here is my vlog for this week!



[Leave a Comment](#)

Posted in [Uncategorized](#)

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**week 10** Posted by: [hunterkopczynski](#) | April 3, 2010

This week started off quick! On Monday, M. was out so I got to teach at the middle school all day on my own which was great. The eighth graders were a bit talkative but that was the only problem. M. wrote up a few members of the percussion the next day, as they were the source of the talking problems. I was not going to write them up, but I supported M.'s decision because it has been an ongoing problem. One of the parents asked for specific details as to why their son was written up, so I got to write a letter to the parent — good experience! (I've attached the letter below). The student's parent wrote back to me promptly via email after receiving my letter. She said she was impressed with the professionalism and succinctness of the letter and said she'd address the problem at home. Success! And the percussion section has been on task and eager to learn the rest of the week — I think they simply needed to be reminded of the expectations for the class.

The rest of Monday was great! I got to work with the seventh graders for the first time (generally I leave for the high school after the second 6th grade class). It was a lot of fun working with them and I felt very comfortable with the groups.

The rest of the week went by fast. I was back on my normal MS/HS routine on Tuesday. Theory is continuing working on an arranging project. I'm working on concert pieces at the middle school and teaching concepts through that (such as form, march form, keys,



When we first got this assignment I was not really looking forward to this at all. I had never done a blog before. I did not see myself as really writing everything down. That really was not my thing, but I have really come to enjoy this and I plan on continuing it after graduation and into my first job, and it was just a great place for me to write about what happened that day . . . and it [if] it was a stressful day I could go and sit down and write . . . and what is really great about it is, I could come back and read it. I would do a lesson that did not go very well and I would get on the blog and write something and come back and look at it and know how to improve for next time. It gave me time to get down out of my head real quick and then be able to reflect on it later. So it was a great tool for me that I plan to continue using.

Importantly, Ben also used one of his later Vlog posts to begin to reflect on the distinction between being a teacher of students and a student of content. He used this post to articulate and give value to the range of strategies he had used during his student teaching, strategies that he would continue to use and develop in his first year to engage students and move him away from being the stereotypical history teacher who does little more than take on the role of teller of the tale of the past. Ben suggested that the strategies he now had in his “toolbox” gave him a leg up, creating lesson plans and units . . . I really feel that these tools are just a key part of teaching. You can know all of the content in the world, everything about history, but if you can’t communicate it in a way that students understand, it is not going to do you much good. These different strategies help engage students, and engagement is huge, because if you engage them it means they are going to hold onto that information longer than just “here is a lecture, here is a piece of paper and take some notes, study them and take a test” . . . that fosters rote learning and . . . I don’t want that in my classroom. I want students to dig into the information and really feel like they are growing from it, rather than just learning it for the sake of taking a test.

### **Artifact Inclusion in ePortfolio**

Students themselves choose what to integrate from all the class-work activities, assignments, and products into their ePortfolios, as per the constructivist paradigm, acting as autonomous, self-aware, self-regulated, and self-mediated thinkers. We as faculty meet and decide in advance how we will align and sequence this process. Our intensive, on-going revisions started in 2007, but our programs have had a long history of using ePortfolios. Discussions among the music, history/social science, and English

education faculty in 2008 led us to explore our processes and requirements for student reflective practice. We analyzed our methods coursework and student artifacts, and after conducting content analyses, we discovered that our students had different levels of aptitude for thinking and writing reflectively about becoming a teacher. In 2009, we immersed ourselves in self-study of the literature on reflective practice and devised new pedagogies for our students. We required them to complete blog posts (i.e., weblogs) and vlog posts (i.e., VideoLogs). We transcribed and analyzed student reflective data (after student graduation, IRB exempt #08-777) and found that levels of reflective practice differed between these two modalities. We added Video Collages and Twitter to our curricula for our 2009-2010 students to consider using as vehicles for reflection. After transcribing again the material and analyzing the content of the reflective posts, we observed that students were more deeply reflective when they Vlogged and created the Video Collages. We created an overall rubric to guide conversations with students about their professional dispositions and asked our students to reflect on their beliefs and behaviors in their reflective practices (e.g., blog, vlog, tweets, collages). Our 2010-11 study data showed a deepening of all reflective practice in our students, as we created and administered a rubric to evaluate levels of reflective practice both in class and in the ePortfolio. Candidates who reflect both in and on practice possess an important professional disposition. The reflections that students create give us insight into their accounts of their understandings and misunderstandings and also into their thinking as teachers, especially when candidates link theory to practice and consider the moral and ethical implications of their teaching beliefs and behaviors. When students were given choices of modalities, the quality of reflections improved.

As practitioners who use ePortfolios, our primary goal is to be exemplary teachers; our collaboration has only strengthened our individual teaching skills and the learning of our students. We have analyzed pages of student reflective data to ascertain whether our approach was working and whether we had adhered to best practices for our students in using reflective practice as part of teaching and learning (Kajder & Parkes, 2012; Parkes & Kajder, 2011). We found that students gained deeper levels of critical thinking skills when they were afforded the choice of reflecting with a variety of multi-modal methods. By questioning our pedagogical techniques and analyzing student data for evidence of improvement, we were able to increase our students’ skills and we learned more about ourselves. We, in turn, became more reflective teachers ourselves in terms of designing ways to integrate ePortfolios within and through our courses and establish a

collaborative teaching and learning environment to support the ePortfolio creation process.

**How we integrate ePortfolios into our courses.** Students experience immediate, formative, and summative feedback (i.e., assessment) that facilitates the use of their reflective practice about their own classroom contexts. Within the methods classes, we give our students assignments that contain reflective prompts ([https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hzvGLAqUagiOi3hrX\\_w-2bba9uRTVyjIVch6QjEEC4s/edit?pli=1](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hzvGLAqUagiOi3hrX_w-2bba9uRTVyjIVch6QjEEC4s/edit?pli=1)), as suggested by Larrivee (2008) and Rickards et al. (2008). For example, when they conduct a peer-teaching episode, they watch the video to examine their teaching to evaluate their and write a reflective paper about what they saw and how they might improve their future work. While students are in field internships, we are able to respond to students quickly and with evaluative comments (e.g., see <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D-y1uWvLIIPBbeizZy0pMhnb2umt7ttvC9awrMmMEcw>) through the blogs they keep about their observations in schools and their perceptions of their own learning. They question old beliefs and look for new information; they re-examine their knowledge, their thoughts, experiences, and behaviors as developing teachers in the K-12 setting. The timely feedback we give them is critical in the pedagogical instructional cycle, and while criteria based, it is particularly formative for both the students and us as teachers. After receiving feedback on reflections or class products, the students know immediately where they need to improve. By asking them to self-assess with rubrics and criteria before they submit their work, we find that when asked to review and reflect on their efforts, our students show a willingness to monitor and deliver outstanding quality work of their own volition. With increasing opportunities to share and collaborate in class and out, with the use of blogs, the discussion threads, and e-mail communication, students often problem-solve issues and find and share solutions rather than just make a “one-stop” learning goal, such as, “What is on the test next week?” An example of this collaboration is exemplified by this student’s e-mail sent to members of his cohort:

I recommend you take a look at the videos just to listen to H coach you through the process. H has the creation matrix part down. If you have questions on creating the interface hit-up the blog for some help . . . H's coaching is very good. Here is the link. ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=YYLXY9OuV\\_E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=YYLXY9OuV_E))

to the related student-made video tutorial. We regard this student-created tutorial, unprompted by faculty, as an illustrative example of how the ePortfolio creation process not only helps facilitate autonomous, creative,

and intellectual thinking but also offers possibilities for encouraging interaction and collaboration among cohort members. Such collegial collaborations reflect the kind of dispositions one needs in order to become a forward-thinking colleague in any professional learning community.

The mix of independent and collaborative problem-solving exhibited throughout the year with the ePortfolio process ultimately makes an impact on student-teachers’ own learning, and critically, on their teaching and learning practices as professionals in K-12 settings. This gives them quality artifacts from which they can select to craft their narrative accounts of their growth in their ePortfolio. They take this reflective work, connect it, and then reflect again as part of the process constructing their teacher identities as reflective practitioners. The meta-reflective practices that surface in the ePortfolio are also assessed summatively.

**The teaching and learning environments.** Collectively, we each teach a section of four classes that are paired, two in the fall and two in the spring. Each semester, one class is set on campus and the other is set in the field, in K-12 schools where students are learning to teach. Our students’ learning is enhanced by experiencing and using these technologies because they are able to show us how they think, as well as what they know and can do, first as a student and finally as a teacher; they can illustrate this to us most effectively using audio, video, text, and reflective practices within the course management system, blogs, and later, the ePortfolio platforms. Their ePortfolios are then richly multimodal products of their journey from student to teacher; and as a product, they become a space to celebrate the student-teachers’ learning. It is, however, the process of creating the ePortfolios that strongly impacts and shapes our students’ learning paradigm.

### Looking Ahead

When our programs began working with ePortfolios, sustainability was an issue because of technological difficulties, such as lost and broken links to past artifacts that stymied efforts to effectively move forward in the intent to incorporate effectively the practice of reflection within and across programs of study. Our work is now held on different platforms in order to give more ownership to the students, allowing them to take their ePortfolios onto the job market and into their first jobs. We use Scholar (a Sakai platform) so that they experience a Learning Management System, and we have allowed them choice by experimenting with a variety of different platforms to host their ePortfolios: from Netscape to Dreamweaver to Filebox, a variety of different storage sites, and

Weebly, GoogleSites, and Digication. We give students these choices so that they can sustain their work as developing practitioners into their lives as lifelong learner-teachers.

Because the tools of technology change constantly, it is important that ePortfolio implementation be made with colleagues and that deliberative decisions be made within the engaged scholarship of teaching (Boyer, 1997; Hatch, 2005). We have in process a research study to refine further and calibrate our ePortfolio assessment rubric. Testing our reflective-practice assessment tool and ascertaining agreement between judges is important to assuring that we are measuring what we propose to measure and that we do so consistently from year to year.

Our future goal is simply to articulate the concept of meta-reflection in ePortfolios and to encourage meta-reflection in our students. Our ongoing efforts are clearly aligned with our conception of the scholarship of teaching. This, as Shulman (2011) pointed out, should be “public, subject to peer evaluation, and subject to use by members of one’s disciplinary community” (p. 4). For us, it’s not a question of how we will sustain our dedication to effectively integrate ePortfolios to improve student learning. Our primary goal is now to reflect and refine our processes to continue supporting student learning with ePortfolio beyond their graduate careers and toward National Board Certification, long after teacher candidates have left our programs.

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Appendix A  
Rubric for ePortfolio

**ARTS AND HUMANITIES – DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**  
**GRADUATE MASTER OF ARTS – EDUCATION EPORTFOLIO EVALUATION RUBRIC**

Student name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Date of defense: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**The chair and each member of the committee will be required to evaluate each ePortfolio individually. Evaluations will be averaged to give a final score.**

This evaluation is modeled after recommendations from the Interstate New Teacher and Support Consortium, along the guidelines set forth by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Please complete the evaluation using the following rubric and give one score per area I-V.

3 Exceptional (Distinguished) The candidate exhibits superior mastery of the knowledge, skills, or dispositions required by the standard. The candidate substantially exceeds expectations by providing multiple layers of connected and convincing evidence to show exceptional performance in meeting the professional standard or principle.

2 Strong (Proficient) The candidate exhibits intermediate to advanced performance in relation to essential knowledge, skills, or dispositions required by the standard. The candidate exceeds satisfactory expectations by providing multiple sources of clear evidence to make a strong case for meeting the professional standard.

1 Competent (Basic) The candidate exhibits minimum performance in relation to essential knowledge, skills, or dispositions required by the standard. The candidate meets minimum expectations by providing at least 3 pieces of evidence to meet the professional standard.

0 Unsatisfactory. The candidate exhibits unacceptable performance in relation to the essential knowledge, skills, or dispositions required by the standard. The candidate provides little or no evidence for meeting the standard and does not meet minimum acceptable expectations.

**Scoring 13-15 Exceptional, 10-12 Proficient, 5-9 Competent, 0-4 Unsatisfactory**

**TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_

| NCATE Standards   | INTASC 2011 Standards/ Principles   | Elements / Focus   | Indicators of success   | Score            |
|---|---|--|---|------------------|
| <b>I. CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (1.a)</b><br>Teacher candidates have in-depth knowledge of the content that they plan to teach as described in professional, state, and institutional standards. They demonstrate their knowledge through inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis of the subject. All program completers pass the content examinations in states that require examinations for licensure. Candidates in advanced programs for teachers are recognized experts in the content that they teach. | Standard #4: Content Knowledge<br>The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content. | Knowledge of music<br><br>Analyses<br><br>Conducting skill<br><br>Performance skill<br><br>Aural skill<br><br>Musicality<br><br>Knowledge of music history | Score analyses and rehearsal guides<br><br>Review of materials<br><br>Lesson plans<br><br>Listening guides<br><br>Reflection about teaching<br><br>Teaching video evaluations<br><br>Lessons taught | <b>Score: I.</b> |

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| <p><b>II. PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (1.b)</b><br/>                 Teacher candidates reflect a thorough understanding of the relationship of content and content specific pedagogy delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. They have in-depth understanding of the content that they plan to teach and are able to provide multiple explanations and instructional strategies so that all students learn. They present the content to students in challenging, clear, and compelling ways, using real-world contexts and integrating technology appropriately. Candidates in advanced programs for teachers have expertise in pedagogical content knowledge, and share their expertise through leadership and mentoring roles in their schools and communities. They understand and address student preconceptions that hinder learning. They are able to critique research and theories related to pedagogy and learning. They are able to select and develop instructional strategies and technologies, based on research and experience that help all students learn.</p> | <p><i>Standard #1: Learner Development</i><br/>                 The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.<br/> <i>Standard #2: Learning Differences</i><br/>                 The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.<br/> <i>Standard #8: Instructional Strategies</i><br/>                 The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.<br/> <i>Standard #3: Learning Environments</i><br/>                 The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.<br/> <i>Standard #5: Application of Content</i><br/>                 The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.<br/> <i>Standard #7: Planning for Instruction</i><br/>                 The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.</p> | <p>Plans for lesson<br/>                 Modeling<br/>                 Imitation<br/>                 Verbal association<br/>                 Symbolic association<br/>                 Learning from the familiar<br/>                 Movement<br/>                 Direct instruction<br/>                 Creativity<br/>                 Diagnostic and prescriptive teaching<br/>                 Positive and efficient class &amp; rehearsal environment<br/>                 Learner-centered activities</p> | <p>Arrangements<br/>                 Audio recordings<br/>                 Lesson plans<br/>                 Lesson plans adapted for children with special needs<br/>                 Reflection about teaching children with special needs<br/>                 Score arrangements<br/>                 Website resources<br/>                 Journal reflections<br/>                 Score analyses<br/>                 Listening guides</p> | <p><b>Score: II.</b></p> |
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| <p><b>III. PROFESSIONAL AND PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE SKILLS</b><br/>(1.c)<br/>Teacher candidates can apply the professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards to facilitate learning. They consider the school, family, and community contexts in which they work and the prior experience of students to develop meaningful learning experiences. They reflect on their practice. They know major schools of thought about schooling, teaching, and learning. They are able to analyze educational research findings and incorporate new information into their practice as appropriate. Candidates in advanced programs for teachers reflect on their practice and are able to identify their strengths and areas of needed improvement.</p> <p>They engage in professional activities. They have a thorough understanding of the school, family, and community contexts in which they work and collaborate with the professional community to create meaningful learning experiences for all students. They are aware of current research and policies related to schooling, teaching, learning, and best practices. They are able to analyze educational research and policies and can explain the implications for their own practice, and for the profession.</p> | <p><i>Standard #8: Instructional Strategies</i><br/>The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.</p> <p><i>Standard #3: Learning Environments</i><br/>The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.</p> <p><i>Standard #5: Application of Content</i><br/>The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.</p> <p><i>Standard #7: Planning for Instruction</i><br/>The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.</p> <p><i>Standard #6: Assessment</i><br/>The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision-making.</p> <p><i>Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice</i><br/>The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.</p> <p><i>Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration</i><br/>The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.</p> | <p>Expectations for behavior</p> <p>Efficient handling of materials, music and instruments</p> <p>Pacing, enthusiasm, and teacher intensity</p> <p>Conducting skill</p> <p>Analysis of music</p> <p>Clear learning goals &amp; instructional procedures</p> <p>Active engagement of students</p> <p>Activities based on curriculum standards</p> <p>Short and long term planning</p> <p>Lesson plans</p> | <p>Assessment tools</p> <p>Teacher work samples</p> <p>Lesson plans</p> <p>Budget projects</p> <p>Self evaluation of teaching video</p> <p>Classroom and rehearsal management plans</p> <p>Anecdotal observations of student response</p> <p>Lesson and rehearsal plans designed to develop sound fundamentals, aural skills, and performance with understanding</p> <p>Journal reflections</p> <p>Curriculum plans</p> <p>Travel projects</p> <p>Responses to journal articles</p> <p>Case study of IEPs</p> | <p><b>Score: III.</b></p> |
|--|--|--|---|---------------------------|

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| <p><b>IV STUDENT LEARNING</b><br/>(1.d)<br/>Teacher candidates focus on student learning and study the effects of their work. They assess and analyze student learning, make appropriate adjustments to instruction, monitor student learning, and have a positive effect on learning for all students. Candidates in advanced programs for teachers have a thorough understanding of assessment. They analyze student, classroom, and school performance data and make data-driven decisions about strategies for teaching and learning so that all students learn. They collaborate with other professionals to identify and design strategies and interventions that support student learning.</p> | <p><i>Standard #1: Learner Development</i><br/>The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.<br/><i>Standard #2: Learning Differences</i><br/>The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.<br/><i>Standard #6: Assessment</i><br/>The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision-making<br/><i>Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice</i><br/>The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.</p> | <p>Sequential age appropriate music instruction</p> <p>Activates prior knowledge and experience (learn from the familiar)</p> <p>Using assessments to diagnose student readiness, to understand learner progress, to inform future instruction, and make summative evaluations about student achievement.</p> | <p>Journal reflections that observe student learning and / or motivation</p> <p>Teacher work sample – assessment tools</p> <p>Pre-post tests of student learning</p> <p>Reflections about pre-post testing of student achievement</p> <p>Self evaluation of conducting video</p> <p>Reflective practice about one's own communication via gesture</p> <p>Lesson plans</p> <p>Case studies of students with special needs and students for whom English is not their first language</p> | <p><b>Score: IV.</b></p> |
|---|--|---|--|--------------------------|

|   |   |   |  |                         |
|---|---|---|--|-------------------------|
| <p><b>V. PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS</b> Candidates work with students, families, colleagues and communities in ways that reflect the professional dispositions expected of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that create caring and supportive learning environments and encourage self-directed learning by all students. Candidates recognize when their own professional</p> | <p><i>Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice</i><br/>The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.<br/><i>Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration</i><br/>The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure</p> | <p>Reflections on teaching</p> <p>Professional growth</p> <p>Participation in school district events</p> <p>Awareness of community resources</p> <p>Respective and productive communication with families</p> | <p>Philosophy statement</p> <p>Rationale for music in the schools</p> <p>Review of participation in national / state organizations</p> <p>Journal reflections about teaching one's peers</p> <p>Attendance at faculty meetings</p> | <p><b>Score: V.</b></p> |
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| dispositions may need to be adjusted and are able to develop plans to do so. | learner growth, and to advance the profession. | Self awareness of dispositions<br><br>Willingness to respond to supervisor/ clinical faculty suggestions | Attendance of field hours, direct instruction and observation<br><br>Disposition self or professor evaluations<br><br>Professional Resume |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|

**Scoring: 13-15 Exceptional, 10-12 Proficient, 5-9 Competent, 0-4 Unsatisfactory**

**TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflective Practice Component of ePortfolio**

| Capstone or macro-reflection in ePortfolio | Level 0 (Unsatisfactory)           | Level 1 (Basic) 70-80  | Level 2 (Competent) 80-90   | Level 3 (Distinguished) 90-100   | Score |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|-------|
| Reflection on practice                     | No reflection on practice is given | Does not recognize change to practice but discusses it<br><br>Does not perceive relationships between student learning and teaching practices but discusses them<br><br>Does not engage in critical criticism of one's own teaching but discusses one's teaching | Is unclear which changes to practice occurred<br><br>Perceives relationships between student learning and teaching practices<br><br>Engages in critical criticism of one's own teaching   | Acknowledges and articulates changes in practice<br><br>Analyzes relationships between student learning and teaching practices<br><br>Engage in critical criticism of one's own teaching offering alternatives for future practice                               |       |
| Critical reflection of growth              | No reflection of growth is given   | Does not perceive area of change in beliefs or assumptions<br><br>Does not observe self in the process of thinking<br><br>Does not question commonly-held beliefs<br><br>Does not craft narrative using past experiences, reflections, or learning               | Is unclear which changes to beliefs or assumptions have occurred<br><br>Partially observes self in the process of thinking<br><br>Questions commonly-held beliefs without offering alternatives<br><br>Narratives refers minimally to past experiences, reflections, and learning | Acknowledges and articulates change in beliefs or assumptions<br><br>Observes self often in the process of thinking<br><br>Questions commonly-held beliefs offering solutions<br><br>Narrative weaves richly between past experiences, reflections, and learning |       |
| Total Score                                |                                    |  |   |  | /200  |