A WEB Based Electronic Portfolio System for Tracking, Assessing and Displaying Candidate Performance

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Western Kentucky University's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences has received an Innovation Challenge Grant from the United States Department of Education. The project, called e-train express, will implement programs and strategies that increase the number and quality of new teachers who are highly effective in using technology to facilitate, assess and communicate learning for all students.

Since only 20% of current teachers feel comfortable using technology in their classrooms and over two million new technology proficient teachers will be needed in the next decade, Western Kentucky University (WKU), along with partner schools [schools in the 28 districts of the Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC)], the Compass Learning Corporation and NetTango are implementing programs and practices designed:

- To ensure that all teachers who graduate from our teacher education program can use technology to increase student achievement;
- To ensure that all graduates can use technology to assess student learning;
- To ensure that all university faculty from both teacher education and the arts and sciences departments can model effective technology-assisted instruction for prospective teachers;
- To ensure that electronic portfolios are used as the primary means of gathering data used in the evaluation of teacher performance;
- To use technology to show K-12 students that teaching is a good career option; and
- To set up an electronic clearinghouse that will give teachers and teacher educators throughout the country access to exemplary technology-assisted lesson plans and assessments.

Western Kentucky University believes that technology has the potential to make teaching and learning far more efficient than in the past. Technology not only gives people access to new information, it gives them more opportunities to work together. The e-train express will enable WKU to integrate technology in teacher preparation courses and use technology to spread the best practices that develop from them.

During the first year of the e-train project the focus has been on two areas: Ensuring that all university faculty from both teacher education and the arts and sciences departments can model effective technology-assisted instruction for prospective teachers and establishing and using an electronic portfolio system for tracking, assessing and displaying candidate performance and assessing our program. This paper focuses on the development and use of our electronic portfolio system.
This paper describes:

- The process of developing critical performances for every course taken by teacher candidates in teacher preparation courses and courses in the arts and sciences;
- The process of developing scoring rubrics for these performances;
- The development of a web based electronic portfolio system for tracking candidate behaviors related to each critical performance;
- The development an assessment system for evaluating candidate work using the electronic portfolio system;
- The development of a process for making selected student work available for perspective employers and others to view;
- The development of a procedure for assessing our program using data from the electronic portfolio system; and
- The process that has been developed for other colleges and universities to share our system.

For more information about e-train express, please see www.etrainexpress.com.