

Final Report
School of Education 2006-2007 Assessment Project
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The purpose of this project was to conduct an audit of the major assessment tool in our teacher education programs, the e-portfolio, to see the extent to which our students seem to be developing competence as culturally responsive teachers. This concept which is implied in the mission of our teacher education programs (www.education.wisc.edu/pi34), describes teachers who know how to learn about the cultures and communities of their students and how to build on this knowledge in positive ways within the classroom. Twenty five e-portfolios were randomly selected from six of our certification programs and examined for evidence of the developing competence of student teachers as culturally responsive teachers. The portfolios examined were from students who completed their programs during the 2006-2007 academic year in the following programs: elementary education, special education, science education, social studies education, math education and English education. The analysis was conducted by two students, one paid for with the assessment money provided by the provost's office, and the other provided by other funds in the School of Education.

The findings were that although portfolio artifacts showed that our students were taking the cultural backgrounds of their students into account in their teaching, their focus was on a celebration of cultural differences among groups rather than on actively building on the cultural resources of their students in classroom instruction. White teacher education students also did not focus on race as an element of their students' cultures. A culturally responsive approach to teaching involves a break with a banking view of the educational process (a one way flow of knowledge from the teacher to the learners). There was strong evidence of the maintenance of a banking view of education in the portfolio artifacts. What was lacking in the portfolios was evidence that student teachers' instruction was being influenced by the cultures and funds of knowledge in their students' communities in ways beyond celebrating group cultural traditions. There was no evidence of a focus on variation within cultural groups.

There are two possibilities that would explain these findings. One is that what students put into their e-portfolios does not accurately represent their current development as culturally responsive teachers. This would have implications for changing what students are asked to put into their portfolios. The other possibility is that the above accurately describes the state of student teachers' development as culturally responsive teachers. This would have implications for the curriculum and instructional practices in our certification programs. The results of this audit will be discussed by the School of Education Coordinating Council for Teacher Education to determine how to respond.