

March 14, 2009

To the Internal & External Assessors
For Teaching Portfolio Assessment
Alverno College

Dear Barb Olson & Linda Forbord,

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for taking the time to review my portfolio. It is my hope that this portfolio will be a testament to my effective education at Alverno College, made possible by individuals like you. I would like to take a moment and explain the organization of this portfolio and describe the philosophies that have guided me in my portfolio process and my teaching beliefs.

I have organized my portfolio based on a book entitled *The Theory of Oz: Rediscovering the Aims of Education* written by Howard Good. I located this book early during my education here at Alverno College. Good's purpose for writing the book was to inform those interested in education, that instructors must teach skills in addition to the academic standards established for student learning. One must teach such skills as empathy and respect in order to empower the student to effectively put into practice what they are learning. Howard Good used both the classic children's story and film version of *The Wizard of Oz* as a metaphor to describe what education should be. My first thought was "How can *The Wizard of Oz* story be seen as a way to educate?" What I ultimately discovered was not only an effective means of guiding an educator's practice but an idea that I saw as a connection to the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Teacher Standards. The INTASC teacher standards are the standards that Wisconsin has adopted for teacher licensure.

Howard Good examined what it was that the Scarecrow, Tin Man, Lion and Dorothy desired most. Scarecrow wanted a brain, Tin Man wanted a heart, Lion wanted courage and Dorothy sought home. Good then described how each of these things that the characters desired were aspects educators should consider in order to effectively teach their students. My portfolio is divided into sections entitled Brains, Heart, Courage and Home. I have provided in each section

a rationale statement that explains my connections to the INTASC teaching standards. I see each of these notions as ideas that educators must not only teach to their students but embody themselves. My philosophy of education is very much based on the theories of Vygotsky and Urie Bronfenbrenner. I believe that educators must use authentic means of instruction that are based on the students needs and taught at their zone of proximal development. As a teacher, I view myself as a guide, rather than a dictator. My goal is to bring the students from awareness, to an understanding and ultimately a point in which they are able to apply what they have learned. In order to accomplish this goal, I must consider aspects about character and social skills that could hinder or help a student's development. A child is influenced by the world around them and changes in their environment can effect changes in their development. As an educator, I must also be aware of the many influences on a child's life in order to understand the best approach to take with regards to their education and development.

The organizational approach I've used in my portfolio also exemplifies my educational philosophies, as well as my abilities. I've taken an idea from someone more experienced, Howard Good, who is a teacher, a former school board president and a contributor to educational resources. I have examined his ideas in light of my own beliefs regarding education, the standards I am expected to meet and the *Alverno Education Abilities*. There is a degree of risk-taking involved with this approach because it is dependent on my ability to clearly state the connections I have made and how these connections will affect my practice as an educator. One thing that I have learned about being an educator is that it takes a tremendous amount of courage. I am hoping that those reviewing this portfolio will see that I have taken a leap of courage in creating my teaching portfolio web page and that I am well prepared to student teach. Again, I'd like to thank you for your time and your willingness to review my portfolio.

Sincerely,

Carrie Elizabeth Reno