

## **Teacher Evaluation Using the Danielson Framework**

### **6. A Professional Portfolio: ‘Artifact Party’**

#### **A. Using Artifacts to Help Determine Performance Levels**

#### **Artifact Party Guidelines**

CHARLOTTE DANIELSON: Of course, Domains 1 and 4 are behind the scenes work of teaching, very important to good teaching. I mean, it’s an error to think that only when you’re in the classroom can you know what a teacher’s work is because there’s a lot they do before and after and beside. So the planning and preparation, which is Domain 1, the evidence that you as an evaluator have for that is, of course, in the pre-observation conference, the planning conference, but it can also be in other documents, other artifacts, a unit plan, photographs of a teacher’s classroom. So it lends itself to artifacts that are not necessarily tied to a specific lesson that you would review before a lesson but more general than that.

And you can see some patterns of a teacher’s planning skills when you see many plans. Now Domain 4 is only ever revealed through artifacts. Well, 4A, which is reflection on practice, is part of a reflecting conference after a lesson. But, it can also be more general than that, by the way; it can be all about a teacher’s entire practice. But 4B, which is maintaining accurate records, 4C is communicating with families, 4D is contributing and being part of a professional community, 4E has to do with maintaining one’s own professional learning, engaging in professional growth, and 4F is professionalism, which is integrity and ethics and that sort of thing.

Those you would never see in the classroom. You can’t see them in the classroom; they don’t happen in the classroom. They are, however, essential to good teaching. And in fact, when teachers are actually dismissed from their jobs, it’s often for things in Domain 4. That is, they’ve been nonresponsive to parents, like don’t return phone calls, or their records are in disarray and they’re chaotic, or they don’t turn stuff in on time, or they are insulting to their colleagues, they’re not a responsible member of community. These are essential to good teaching. They don’t have anything to do with the classroom, not directly.

But they have a lot to do with a teacher’s sense of professionalism. The artifacts that teachers produce and assemble are part of their job as individual teachers, of course. But looking at them is greatly enhanced if it’s done by teachers in a group. And so if a bunch of us get together as part of a professional learning community, and some people call this an “artifact party,” we can learn from one another. I mean, I might be interested to see how you do your class newsletter, for example. And so by sharing what we do, we not only demonstrate our own skill in the components in Domain 4 and so an evaluator is interested in that, but because we do it together, we also learn from one another. And furthermore, it’s more fun. It’s more fun. And I’ll say one last thing about the artifacts

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that teachers collect, primarily as part of Domain 4 but also Domain 1; they should represent what the national board has called a “natural harvest” of a teacher’s work. That is, teachers should never feel that they’re doing this just for this evaluation process. It should reflect what they do already. If you do a newsletter already, just collect them up and then show some.

And so what’s important for the requirements of an evaluation system in Domain 4 is that the guidelines for how to do and how to submit or how to produce and then how to talk about these artifacts are clear to teachers. They need to know when they’re sort of finished, when they’ve done enough. And so you might say, as part of your system, “Well, collect some evidence of, let’s say, 4B: how do you communicate with families? Now here’s a list of 14 things you might do: you might have your handout for back to school night or your newsletter or your directions for a field trip or whatever, a lot of things.”

But then it’s important to say, “Here are a list of 14 things you might do, pick three, three different ones or something.” That is, people need to know when they’re finished because I might have collected some things about how I communicate with families and I might have three or four, and then I discover that some colleague of mine has got 14 and she’s made a video or something, right? So I’m all of a sudden intimidated. That’s not the point of this. It’s not the point of it. The point of it is to be able to talk about that aspect of one’s teaching that’s described in Domain 4 and how you do it.

The important thing is that the guidelines are clear and that they don’t feel burdensome and that what teachers are asked to do represents this natural harvest. When you do all those things, teachers love it because it’s really an opportunity for them to learn from their colleagues.

## **Portfolio Basics**

CHARLOTTE DANIELSON: What provides evidence for the components in Domain 4, and to some degree Domain 1, are artifacts. They’re things, stuff. It’s a unit plan or it’s the newsletter or whatever. The collection of those, putting them together, creates a portfolio. And you can specify what, as part of your evaluation system, what you’d like teachers to collect into that portfolio. Now, that term “portfolio” in some places has a little different meaning as well. Some colleges use that term for their students when they’re graduating, and it’s a big, thick, usually a loose-leaf binder, or it could be electronic.

But it’s got a statement of philosophy and it’s got photographs and it’s meant to actually help them in a job search. That’s one purpose of a portfolio and one, sort of, definition of it. But as we use it here in this process for teacher evaluation, it simply

means a collection of artifacts through which teachers can demonstrate their skill in those aspects of teaching that are not shown in the classroom.

## **An Artifact Party In Action**

**KATHLEEN HANSON:** I've been talking about the artifact party and building up anticipation for you in this process since we started working together at the beginning of the year. For those of you that are new to my school and new to, actually, the profession, all of you are first year teachers this year except for Kate, I want to share a little bit about what the artifact party is. Artifacts and portfolios are kind of buzzwords right now in education.

**VOICEOVER:** In the simplest terms, an artifact can be any item that provides evidence of the teaching practices described in Domains 1 and 4 of the Framework for Teaching. Artifacts should demonstrate skill in various components of the framework, but need not be finished products. Not every artifact needs to be a showpiece. In contrast, a portfolio is a collection of artifacts a teacher creates as part of their professional development. This collection is meant to provide a total picture of teaching.

**KATHLEEN HANSON:** You know that I believe that the artifact should be a learning process for you and for your growth, rather than just something to turn in to me. I won't use your artifacts because my role doesn't require me to use those artifacts. Other teachers will use your artifacts and gain from you, and we want to make those connections between you. The things that are talked about here are guarded by the firewall. None of your conversations here cross that firewall into that formal compliance list. For instance, if I hear you say, "Man, I wish my classroom did that. I wish my kids behaved like that," that's not gonna become part of the evaluation process. So this is safe over here, this artifact party. I trust in you that things you learn from one another will blend in to the performance that you have in the classroom. Does that make sense?

So that wall, that firewall, you can't go this way with it, but it's kinda permeable this way. All the things that you're learning from one another, I hope make a difference in your classrooms. What we're focusing on in Domain 4 for the first part of the year, again, is Domain 4C Reflecting on Teaching, 4D Participating in a Professional Community and even though we're a small group, we become a professional community for our artifact parties for the year, and Growing and Developing Professionally. So those are what I consider to be your goals.

I've asked some of you in our evaluation conferences to bring particular things that I wanted you to share, maybe just one thing, and then left it up to you to choose the other things that you'd like to share.

MICKIE BARRETT: What kind of feedback can we expect to receive off of our artifacts?

KATHLEEN HANSON: Your arti – that’s an excellent question. For this party I don’t give any feedback. You get that feedback from one another. You will pass to me – This is the one requirement that you have for me. This is what I will put in my working file at my office. You’ll have the artifacts that you’ve presenting. I want you to list those and what you’ve brought to the table, and then three artifacts that you’ve learned from and then your reflection. So the evaluation piece of it, when we go over to that observation/evaluation side, it’s not a direct line, it’s a linking line. I expect to see you grow professionally, and this party is one of those supports that will help you grow. Does that help answer that question?

MICKIE BARRETT: Um-hum. Thank you.

KATE NAKAMURA-STEIN: How many artifact parties happen during the year?

KATHLEEN HANSON: You’re required to submit to me evidence of three artifacts. Excuse me, nine artifacts.

KATE NAKAMURA-STEIN: Nine artifacts.

KATHLEEN HANSON: So we’ve divided it into three at a time. So we’ll have three parties.

DAN MASSIMINO: Is there a reflection piece that goes with the artifact, or is it solely a verbal thing where we’re gonna communicate during the party?

KATHLEEN HANSON: Totally a verbal thing. If you care to share some reflections with me and probably this reflection at the bottom will take more of a pluses and wishes kind of thing. What supported your learning? What you need to help support your learning at the second and the third artifact party. Pretty simple because I want the bulk of our time with you talking with one another. I won’t participate. I may look over a shoulder and ask a question now and then, but generally, I want you conversing together as teachers, and that’s where that reflection piece comes. We – and you know I like to keep my meetings quick and on time. We have about 25 minutes left until we’re done.

I’d like you to probably stand up. It’s the end of a long day, I think you’ll get more from it and just pick out one artifact and probably share in pairs. But please be sure you’ve had a chance to talk to everybody here. So as you move forward choose an A and a B. An A partner will start first and just start sharing if you’ve got questions of me, feel free to come and ask, but go for it. Thank you so much.

SHANNON PANFILIO-PADDEN: So you want me to go ahead and go first?

DAN MASSIMINO: You be the A, I'll be the – Yep.

SHANNON PANFILIO-PADDEN: Okay. Part of the Domain 4 is to make sure that you reflect on your teaching practices. So what I decided to focus on this time for this artifact party is to look through my lesson plans that I created for a writing lesson, and then it just – I'm able to plan what I'm going to do, what materials I need for my students, and how I'm going to put them in small groups and pairs. And then, what I love about this form is, at the end I can reflect on my teaching and go back and think about the lessons that I've taught and how I would change them for the next time that I teach them for next year.

DAN MASSIMINO: That's a nice template to have, too, so that you're not guessing at what you should be thinking about. It's already laid out and ready to go.

SHANNON PANFILIO-PADDEN: Yeah, and it's great because it's pretty short so it doesn't take a whole lot of time to have that reflection piece at the end of the lessons.

MICKIE BARRETT: This is my beginning of the year, back-to-school newsletter that I do for my parents. And I kinda just go through some of the key things that I really want my parents to understand, my families to know. So I talk about discipline, and then I talk about spelling lists because I believe in individualizing my spelling based on what my students need. Obviously –

VOICEOVER: Examples of artifacts include such things as: samples of student work and teacher feedback, classroom records, examples of communications with families such as newsletters or phone call logs. Artifacts can also be evidence of professional development, contributions to school community, or membership in professional organizations.

### **Artifact Party Benefits**

KATHLEEN HANSON: If you would go ahead and finish the conversation, in two or three sentences, about the artifact you're sharing at this point in time, and then come back to the table. We'll close and be out of here on time. Again, I appreciate your attendance at our first artifact party of the year. Those of you that have not been through one, I'm trusting that it was fun and beneficial for you. As we go on that continuum of – we talk about the continuum of support from nondirective, collaborative, and directive. It's also a continuum of growth for you as beginning teachers, as well as our continuing contract teachers.

And by having Kate come and share some things, I hope you see some of those possibilities that are out there for you as you embark and become a more integral part of our school system as a whole. But as we close, I'd like you to think of one or two ways that what you heard from somebody else is gonna support the little kid in the classroom, that's gonna support some of those students. So take a moment and just quietly to yourself, I'm gonna ask you to share aloud something that you learned from another person that directly helps kids in classrooms because if we don't link this back to the classroom, we're just drawing a paycheck for nothing. Who would like to start sharing how something they learned today is going to impact children in our classroom here at Iowa Elementary?

KATE NAKAMURA-STEIN: I actually learned from Mickey that it is very important to include information about specific curriculums in her newsletter that she sends home. When I was doing my newsletter, I did it all at the beginning of the school year. But she broke it out into specific curriculum areas and put it in little chunks to send home. And I think that would be easier to digest for the parents and the students, to be able to have those communications more smoothly between the teacher and home.

KATHLEEN HANSON: Thank you for sharing. Another thought?

SHANNON PANFILIO-PADDEN: And what I learned from Dan is that it's important to make those positive connections with parents at the beginning of the school year, so that that line of communication is always open in case there's more serious things down the line during the school year that you can communicate with parents about.

KATHLEEN HANSON: Thank you.

DAN MASSIMINO: Shannon shared a great way to reflect on teaching and to constantly be in a state of monitoring and adjusting so that you can differentiate your instruction for those targeted students that you need to help with interventions, and she had a great piece that allowed you to have some forethought into your planning, as well as a spot where you could reflect on what you've done. So it wasn't just for a lesson, but it was for a series of lessons. So it wasn't just a snapshot and one point in your day, but it was thinking long-term and adjusting as needed.

KATHLEEN HANSON: Thank you for sharing. This has been a great first artifact party, and we appreciate, as your administration and the district, we appreciate that you are part of our district and part of what we do for kids. Share with me a little bit if you would, and I don't believe everybody has to answer each question, but share with me a little bit if you would what your experiences have been like before the sharing of professional artifacts and professional evidence was a practice that you were a part of. So what was your experience like before, if you had a before experience with it?

MICKIE BARRETT: Well, I could share that in our college classes we often had to share artifacts, if you will. They weren't called artifacts, but they were just some of our best work, and the purpose was very different. Now we choose things that relate back to specific elements of our professional practice, and we reflect upon them around that element, and it has purpose. I appreciate that.

KATE NAKAMURA-STEIN: I think it also helps with my personal reflection on the artifact that I'm bringing if it's a specific lesson that I felt needed some work, and I just couldn't figure out where it need to be improved. I can get input from other teachers on, "Well, how can I improve this specific area in here to make it better and make it easier for my students to be able to digest the information."

KATHLEEN HANSON: So you bring your artifacts to the table, not only to share, but to grow then.

KATE NAKAMURA-STEIN: But to grow, yes, to improve them.

KATHLEEN HANSON: Thank you.

DAN MASSIMINO: And to tag on that a little bit, and teaching in isolation doesn't work. We know that doesn't work, and I've heard stories in the past of people having this wonderful little idea that they kept to themselves, and their students were very successful, while the periphery was struggling. And so now, wanting to share those ideas and bringing those artifacts to a party and getting those ideas out to everybody so that all students can succeed, seems to really be guiding where we're going.

KATHLEEN HANSON: Teachers were quite protective of their practice years ago. And if you were not in a formalized collaborative environment, some teachers kept to themselves totally and if it was good, they didn't necessarily wanted to share it because some folks wanted that credit for their ideas.

SHANNON PANFILIO-PADDEN: And I think it also gives a comfortable environment within which you can share because I think, oftentimes, you might have a great idea, but you're not sure where to share that idea or get an – I think the artifact party gives you an opportunity to get feedback from other grade levels and not just your neighbor next door, where you might share that idea with them, they might think it's great, if they might try it themselves, but I think it's really cool when you can, if you're a first grade teacher, to share those ideas with a fifth grade teacher and get their feedback and see how it might work for their grade level. So –

KATHLEEN HANSON: So cross-grade-level sharing would maybe be more intentional than we did it today, would be a positive perspective. The experience of the

artifact party, how does it support you in taking those artifacts from individual pieces to building that portfolio? What are your thoughts about making it into an organized collection of artifacts that becomes that bigger portfolio review?

SHANNON PANFILIO-PADDEN: I think it definitely makes your portfolio a living document, instead of something that's gathering dust on the shelf. So you're constantly adding and taking away or improving on what's inside the portfolio. So when you have that collaboration between other people, that's what makes it a living document, and it's always being refreshed and renewed.

DAN MASSIMINO: It's always interesting to me, too, that we talk about best practices and what we should do in the classroom and what we expect from our students, and yet, we don't expect it of our staff and ourselves sometimes. And this is kind of starting to break that down and say, "Okay, time out." If we want them to do it, we should be doing it, too.

KATHLEEN HANSON: Great. Thank you. When I first learned about artifact parties from Whitney, another administrator in the district who was doing it, it was like a light bulb went off for me as an administrator because, frankly, I'm not the most organized principal in the world, when I was at the job. And when you think about all those artifacts from all those brand new teachers because we were in a growing district, that's a pile of stuff. So it actually supported me in my professional work as a principal because I didn't have to worry about keeping track of all of that stuff.

It, again, put the responsibility on the learner, which were my classroom teachers, and all I had to keep track of for the compliance was that one sheet of paper. But I also got to sit back and just relish the conversations. It was so exciting to hear teachers that have been struggling about something hear an idea from one of their colleagues rather than me telling them, "Well, go do this." To hear that collective learning and growth, it would give me the chills to see the light bulbs go off. It was very gratifying to me as a building administrator, and what a privilege it is to be with you folks today. Thank you so much.

### **Assignment: Practice Looking For Evidence in Artifacts**

VOICEOVER: Assignment: Evidence in artifacts. Practice finding evidence of domains located in various artifacts. We've collected some real artifacts for you to try. Review all of the documents. Look for evidence of the components of the framework for any domain. Write down as many as you can find. When you are finished, compare your notes to the answer key also located in the handouts. Once again, you may have found evidence that we might not have noticed.