



Sheryl Wechsler

Educational Portfolio

Master of Arts in Teaching
Columbia International University,
2010



Purpose

This portfolio is a brief overview of my qualifications, experience, and philosophy as a teacher. I have designed this portfolio around the South Carolina ADEPT domains: planning, instruction, environment and professionalism. For each I have provided a graphic, which shows how I have incorporated that domain into my teaching, and additional examples of work I have done which supports that domain.

Experience and Qualifications	slide 3
Philosophy and Vision	slide 4
Planning	slide 5
Instruction	slide 7
Environment	slide 10
Professionalism	slide 13

Educational Experience

- I completed my Master of Arts in Teaching degree in May 2010 with dual certification in early elementary and elementary education.
- I participated in three extended practicums in 2009:
 - Ballentine Elementary (Richland/Lexington 5), 4th grade & 2nd grade
 - Windsor Elementary (Richland 2), Kindergarten
- I completed 16 weeks of student teaching in a 2nd grade classroom at Chapin Elementary in May 2010.
- During my school career, I have been exposed to the latest research and best practices in education. I have had the opportunity to observe and participate in a variety of educational settings, such as Montessori, Highly Effective Teaching, and magnet schools.
- I desire to provide meaningful learning in a hands-on environment where students are allowed to explore and inquire about the world around them.

Other Qualifications

I have a varied background of working with children through my own experience as a mother of two boys and my work and volunteer experience:

- **Cub Scouts**—I volunteered with Cub Scouts for 8 years and served as both a Den Leader and a Cubmaster. My duties involved planning weekly and monthly events for both indoor and outdoor activities. In addition to working with both small and large groups of boys, I also gained experience working with adult volunteers.
- **Lexington County Museum**—I was employed by the museum for 5 years and was responsible for delivering hands-on, historically accurate tours reflecting South Carolina history to K-5th grade students.
- **Nursery Road Elementary**—As a parent volunteer, I worked in the classroom (K-3rd) and the media center.



Philosophy

I believe that every child can learn and be successful if given the appropriate opportunities. As teachers we are responsible for finding new and innovative ways to capture the interests of our students. This can be accomplished through activities such as hands-on learning, technology, cooperative learning, and inquiry based learning.

Vision

My classroom vision is to provide a secure, loving environment which facilitates children to understand the truth about the world around them. In so doing, they will learn to think critically, communicate effectively, and demonstrate effective interpersonal skills.

Students with Diverse Needs

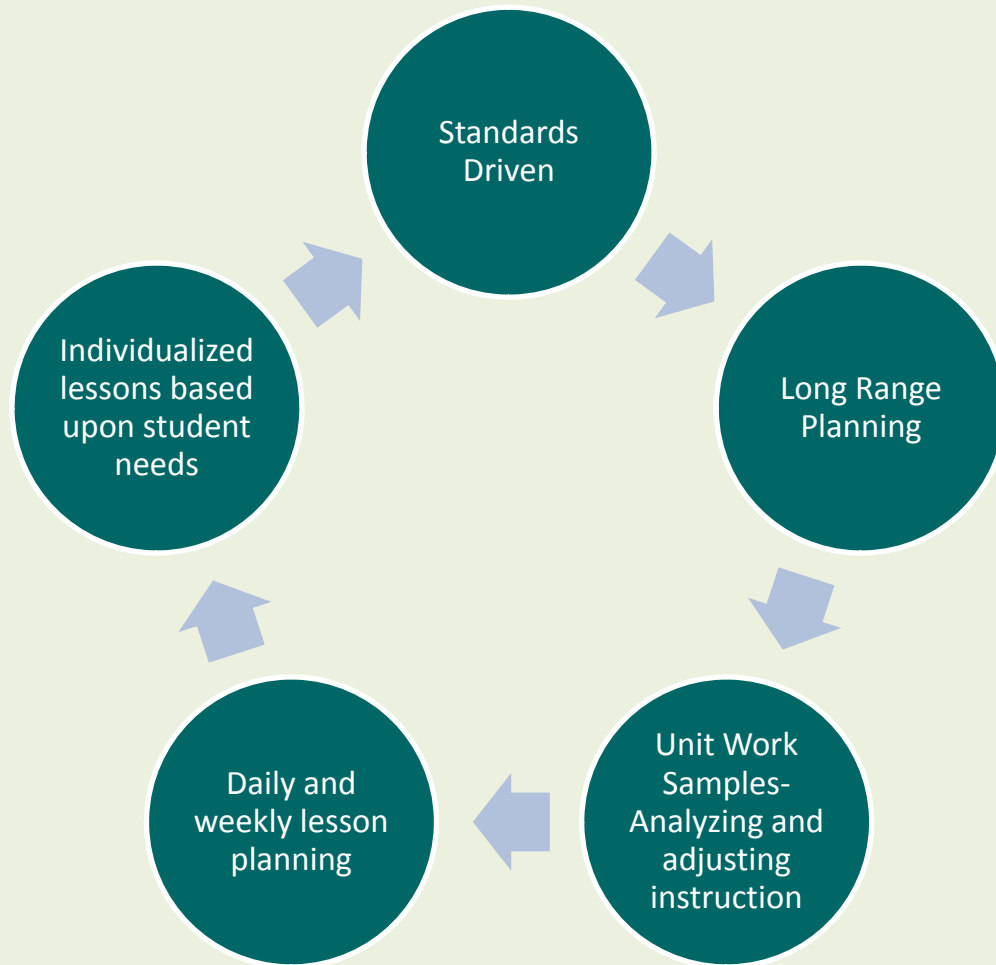
Probably one of a teacher's most challenging tasks is to be able to teach to the needs of each student. I believe that both my BA degree in psychology (with an emphasis on developmental psychology and gifted education) and my current training at CIU have prepared me for this task. Using a combination of different strategies (i.e., brain based, developmental, cooperative learning) will enable me to help every child be successful.





Planning

This graphic demonstrates my belief that a teacher must always be well prepared with both long and short term planning. An effective teacher will design lessons that meet the state standards while also providing the variety needed to meet the needs of all of her students.



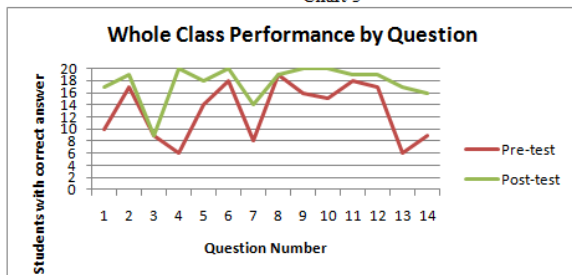
Planning

B. Whole Class Student Performance

Overall, the students showed improvement on every question except numbers 3 and 8. The greatest improvement was shown through question 4 in which 6 students answered it correctly on the pre-test, but all 20 students answered it correctly on the post-test. In the pre-test, there were 6 out of 14 questions in which at least 80% of the students demonstrated understanding; in the post test, there 12 out of 14 questions in which at least 80% of the students demonstrated understanding. The two questions with less than 80% of the students answering correctly were 3 and 7. These questions will be addressed in section VII below. Please see the Chart 3 below for further information on class performance by question number.

Overall, 16 of 20 students demonstrated mastery of the material by obtaining a score of at least 80% on the post-test. Of the remaining 4, 2 scored 79% correct and 2 scored 57% (one of these students will be discussed in the "individual student performance section" below).

Chart 3



These are selections from my **Unit Work Sample** created for a unit on supply and demand. In addition to a pre- and post-assessment, this unit concluded with a whole class auction to demonstrate the principles of supply and demand.

A. Most Successful Learning Goal

By far, learning goal 4 (bartering) was the most successful in this unit. Two questions on the assessment tested for this learning goal. On the pre-test, 50% of the class answered these questions correctly, whereas on the post-assessment, 95% of the class answered these questions correctly. The biggest increase came from question 4 in which the students had to choose the term "bartering" as the answer. Before this unit started, most of the children had not heard of this term; therefore, they answered incorrectly on the pre-test. I believe that several factors worked together to make this learning goal a success. First, I believe that the "Exchange City" (I changed the name to "Barter City" for the actual lesson) activity made clear to the students that trading/bartering goes on every day. I also created a word chart with key words from this unit that we reviewed on a daily basis. I believe this repeated review helped cement the term in the students' minds. Finally, we also read a book which discussed bartering from a Native American perspective. I believe that this story appealed to the children and was relevant to them because we had just finished up a unit about Native Americans, so the children were able to connect this new knowledge to other knowledge they have recently learned.

B. Least Successful Learning Goal

The least successful learning goal was number 3: marketplace and competition. This learning goal was assessed through three questions (3, 7 and 8) on the post-assessment. On the pre-test, 60% of the students answered these questions correctly, whereas on the post-assessment 70% of the students answered the questions correctly. Question 8 does not appear to be an issue as 19 students answered it correctly on both the pre- and post-tests. Question 7 showed some improvement (from 8 to 14 answering correctly), but question 3 remained the same with only 9 students answering it correctly on both the pre- and post-tests. I believe that question 7 may have been confusing to several of the students, especially since all of the choices started with either "con-" or "com-." Students needed to be paying close attention as I was reading this question, or they could easily circle the wrong answer. Students who moved ahead on this test may have circled a word that "looked right" rather than really trying to recall the correct word. I believe that the biggest cause for confusion on question 3 came from the reading of *The Donut Chef*. Although this story was an excellent example of competition between two businesses, it also gave the false impression that the two competing businesses were constantly changing their prices/products in order to keep up with one another. Hence, the majority of students who got question 3 incorrect chose the option that "the price will change from day to day." If I teach this lesson in the future, I will need to make sure to stress that competition tends to equalize prices.



Instruction

The following pages give an overview of my beliefs regarding instruction within the classroom.

- Slide 1 delineates my “big ideas” regarding instruction and my classroom implementation.
- Slide 2 shows a sample unit that I designed incorporating technology, authentic assessment, and multiple intelligences into one seamless unit.

Instruction

Authentic assessments

Use of math manipulatives

Making learning meaningful

Concrete and hands-on learning

SMART response clickers

Streamline videos

Online resources

Technology use

SMART Board

PowerPoint

Daily Instruction

Created a non-fiction animal unit in conjunction with my cooperating teacher.

Balanced literacy

Using shared reading, independent reading, reader's theater and writer's workshop to create seamless reading and writing lessons.

Inquiry Method

Critical thinking skills

Teacher guides the students through the discovery of learning

"Challenge of the Week"

Instruction

Africa



Fun Facts:

Contains the world's longest river (The Nile).
Contains the world's largest desert (The Sahara).
Contains more countries than any other continent (53).
Most of the world's gold and diamonds come from Africa.

The Sahara Desert

Victoria Falls

Baobab Trees

Mount Kilimanjaro

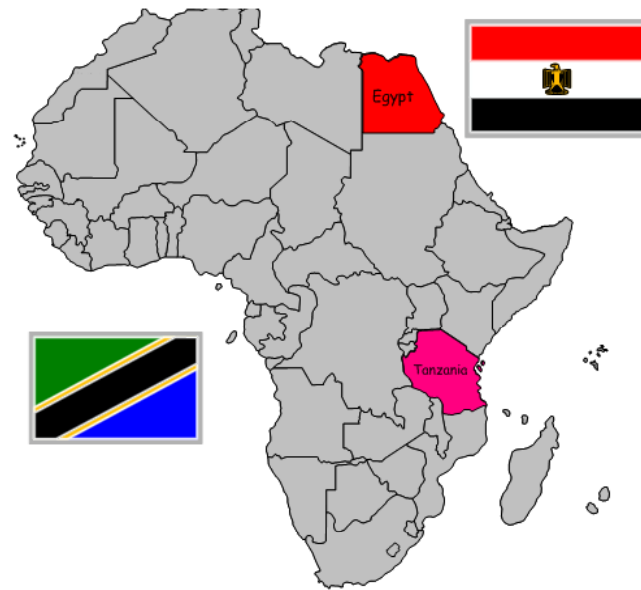


<http://www.junglephotos.com>

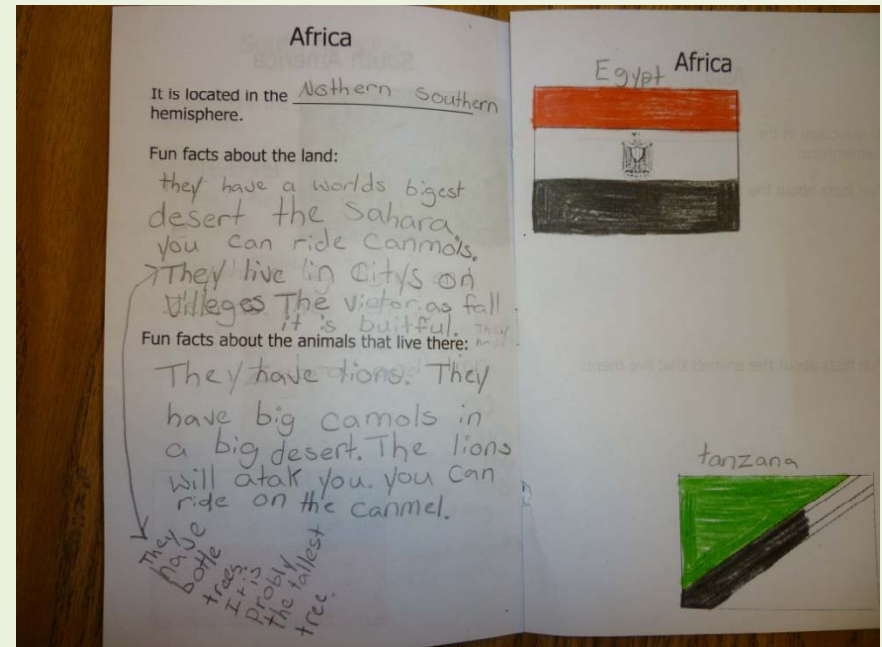
The tallest mountain in Africa reaching 19,340 feet (5,895 m)
Tallest free standing mountain in the world
Kibo peak features a 1.5 mile wide crater

[Africa's geography video](#)

[Animals](#)



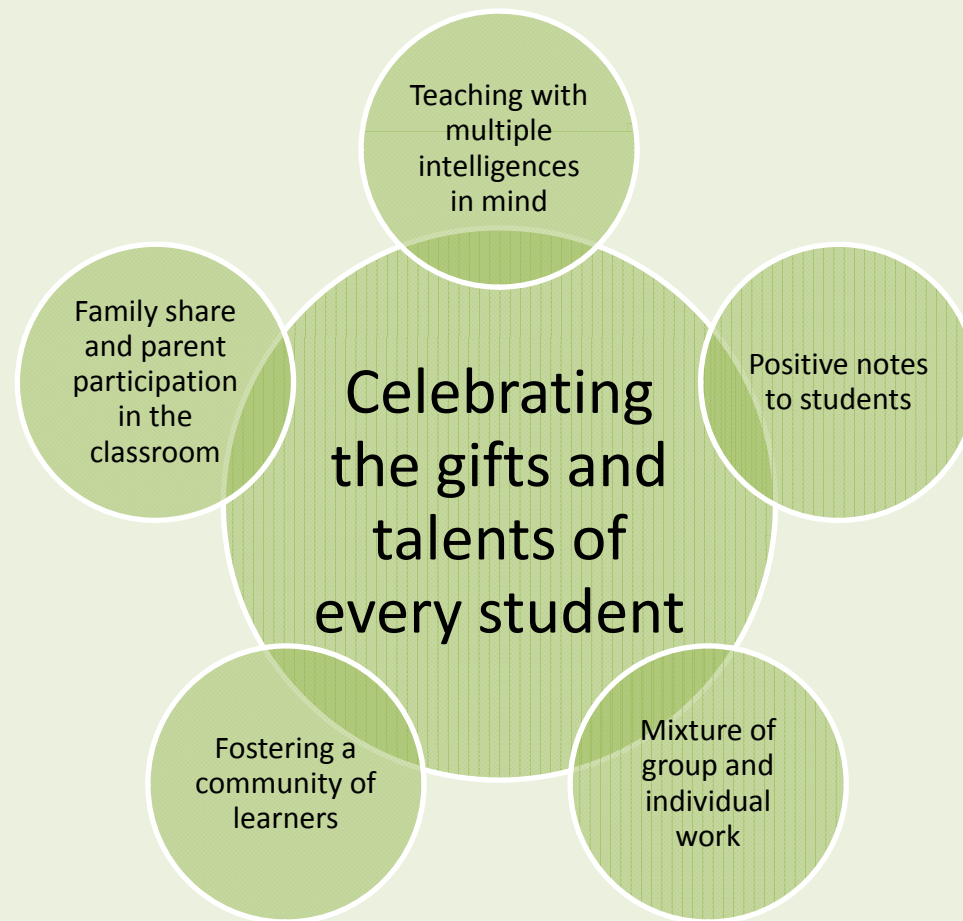
- Samples from my continents unit showing the SMART Board presentation with embedded hyperlinks to online videos and websites (above).
- Students recorded interesting information they learned in their passports (right).



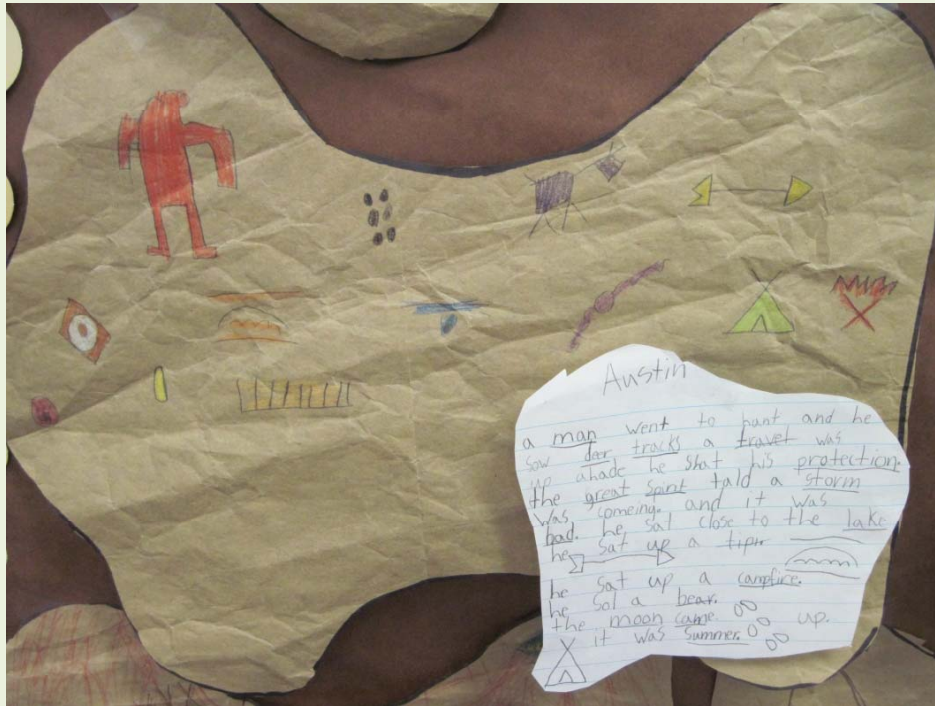


Environment

- This graphic shows ways I have worked to create a positive classroom environment.
- The next two slides show ways I have designed instruction and assessment that appeal to multiple intelligences.



Environment



Above is a sample of a student's buffalo hide story, which was a concluding activity in our Native American unit. This activity especially appealed to the students who enjoy using art to express their ideas.

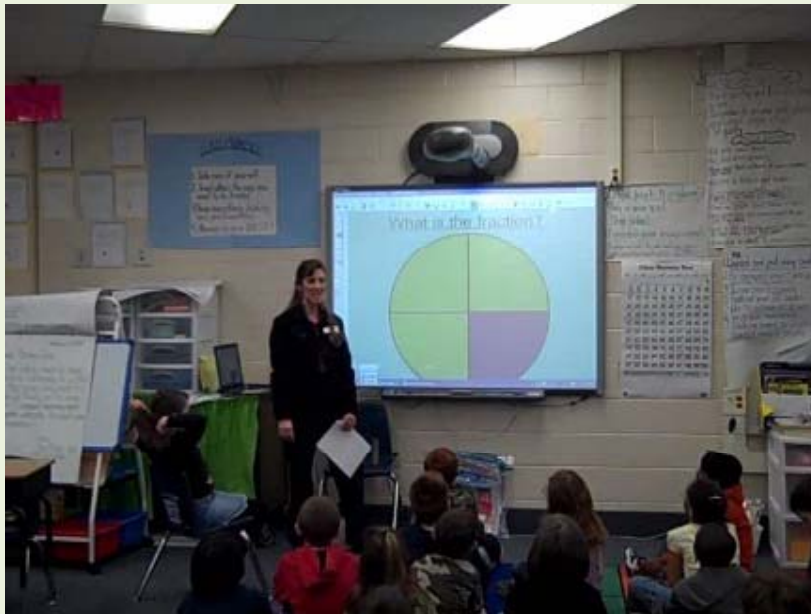
Non-fiction			
Part/Feature	Location	Purpose	Found in all nonfiction?
Captions	Beside pictures/ throughout the text	Give more information about the picture.	Usually
Headings	Throughout the text.	Gives information about the text that follows.	Usually
Diagrams/ Labels	Located throughout the text near pictures.	Gives more information about the pictures	Sometimes
Index	At the end of the book.	Gives the page number of specific topics.	Usually
Glossary			
Timelines	Throughout the book.	Visual picture of what happened in history	No- Usually in history texts.

As a class we charted nonfiction text features. The students later used a minimum of three text features to create their own nonfiction book about an animal of their choice.

Environment

	Factual Info.	Table of Contents	Close-ups	Pictures/Illustration	Heading	Labels	Types of Print	Glossary	Index	Captions	Comparison	Follows a pattern
All About Sea Turtles	Yes - about sea and land turtles.	No	Lets me see the turtle in more detail.	Helps me know what turtles look like.	Gives us information as to what to expect next.	Shows the important parts of the picture.	No	No	No	Gives more detailed information about the picture.	Compares how sea and land turtles are the same & different.	
Volcanoes		✓	Gives us an idea of what a volcano looks like up close.	Shows us different volcanoes.	No	No	Tells us important words about volcanoes.	Helps us understand the meaning of the important words.	✓	No	No	
Ladybugs	All about ladybugs	✓	Letting us see a ladybug in more detail.	Showing us what something looks like.	Tells me what the text will say next.	Shows a specific part in the picture.	These are important words which are also in the glossary.	Tells the meaning of important words.	✓			
Insects	Yes - about insects.	No	No	Shows us a variety of insects.	No	Shows the different body parts of an insect.	No	No	Just an index of pictures.	No	No	
True or False Butterflies and Caterpillars	Yes - in a "True/False" format.	No	Helps us picture it better.	Shows us different pictures of butterflies & caterpillars.	Tells us what information will follow.	No	No	No	✓	Gives us more information about the picture and the text.	Gives a good idea of how small the smallest butterfly is.	Yes - Statement True/False - Answer

The class incorporated what they had learned about nonfiction text features by identifying those features in specific books.



Using the SMART Board to introduce a unit on fractions.



Professionalism

- Works in conjunction with other teachers to share, combine and create new units
- Establishes and maintains positive parent-teacher relationships
- Strives to be a lifelong learner
 - Attended the Regie Routman literacy development course at Chapin Elementary
 - Participated in the *Everyday Editing* book study sponsored through Richland/Lexington 5
 - Member of PSTA and IRA



Assisting students at the Chapin Elementary Literacy night.