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December 12, 2005

Dear Reviewer:

Thank you for taking the time to review my Teaching Portfolio. This portfolio contains five entries demonstrating important mathematical concepts that I have studied and/or implemented during my post-baccalaureate certification program and Master of Education in Secondary Mathematics courses. The first two entries are examples of student-centered, interactive lessons that we participated in as students in order to learn how to teach those types of lessons to our own students. The first entry involves using technology to teach the algebra concepts of graphing lines and circles, finding intercepts, and computing distances between points. Most importantly, the lesson stresses and demonstrates that there are multiple methods that can be pursued to reach a solution. Entry 2 demonstrates the use of manipulatives through a lesson involving geoboards to discover and explore Pick's Formula.

The next two entries are work samples from assignments completed in one of my graduate courses. The third entry is a paper I wrote on Problem-Based Learning. This paper highlights my ability to perform and assimilate research on educational issues. It also provides a significant sample of my writing and communicating ability. If there is one thing I've learned as a parent of a school-aged child, it is that a teacher's ability to communicate clearly and effectively with parents is of great importance. The fourth entry also involves communication. It includes printed samples of a teacher web site that I constructed. Since the printed page is not always the best way to demonstrate and experience a web site, I have included a CD which you can insert into your computer and explore the site interactively.

The final entry showcases my ability to apply several of the concepts I've learned about teaching and assessment to an actual classroom setting. I created two lessons for a high school Statistics course related to experiment design, simulations, and linear regression. Prompted by what I learned while writing the paper in Entry 3, I used a problem-based learning style in the lessons. I was also able to incorporate the use of manipulatives and technology, and make use of cooperative learning groups. Teaching these lessons was a very rewarding experience, which serves to reinforce my desire to utilize the skills I've learned in all subjects and concepts I might be called upon to teach.

Sincerely,

James B. O'Connor
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