

AACTE 2006 SYMPOSIUM

BEYOND A GOOD IDEA: THE CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF TEACHER WORK SAMPLE METHODOLOGY

Paper 1. Continuing a Culture of Evidence: Lessons Learned About the Methodology and Its Use

**Meredith
Brodsky**

**Jerry
Girod**

**Del
Schalock**

**Ella
Taylor**

Teaching Research Institute, Western Oregon University

The Methodology of Teacher Work Sampling

A teacher work sample requires teacher candidates to design an instructional unit that leads toward the accomplishment of one or more state standards toward which students are working, implement the unit, determine the progress made by students toward targeted learning outcomes as a consequence of the unit, analyze and report the progress made by each student and selected sub-groups of students taught, and identify one's strengths and weaknesses as a teacher in light of all the above -- including their implications for further professional development. Instructional units of two to five weeks in duration typically are required in work samples informing final licensure decisions, but "mini" work sample units of three to five days duration often are used in early practicum experiences. Several units of instruction involving more than one subject area may be involved when employing the methodology with early career or experienced teachers.

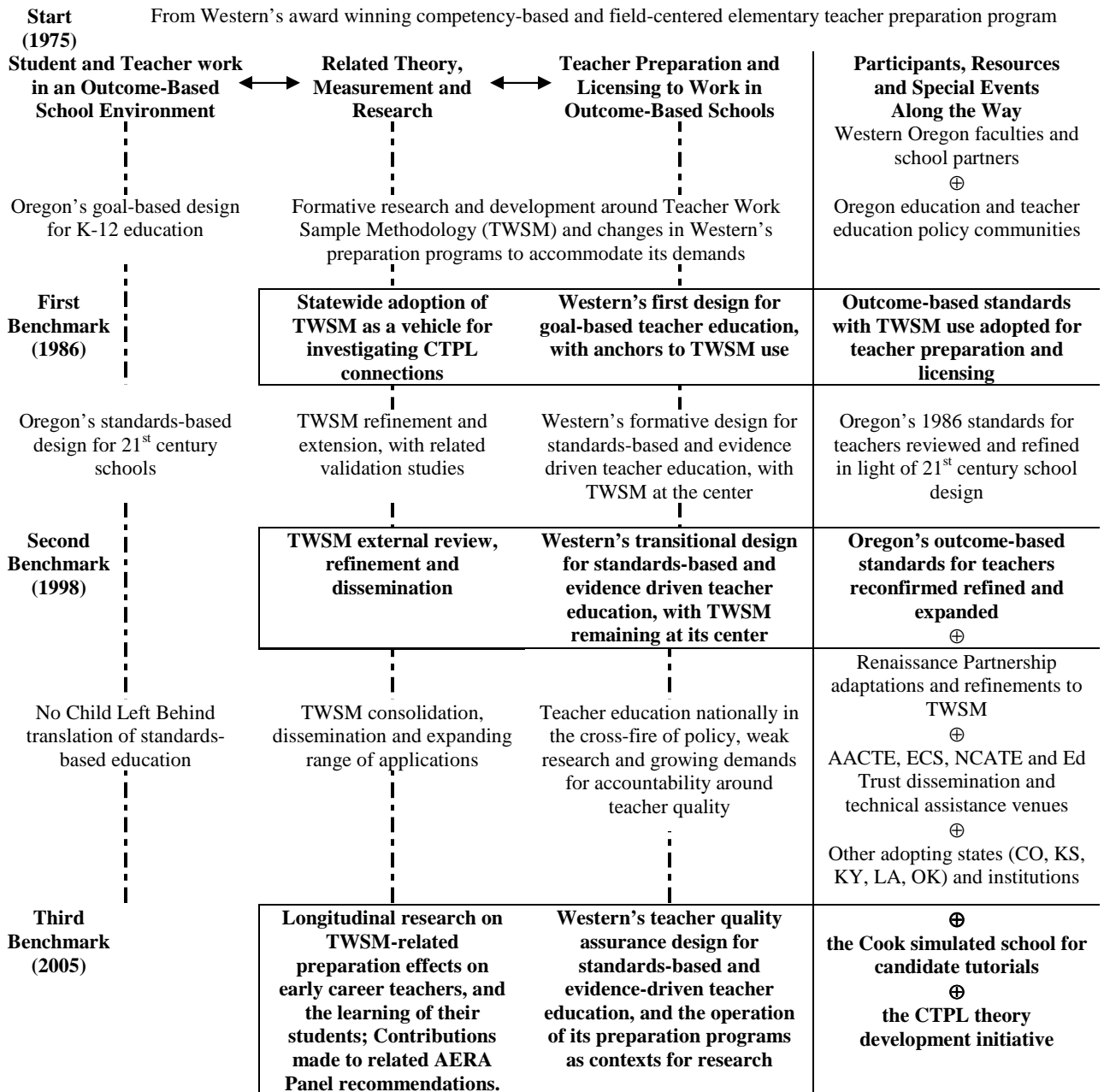
As developed in Oregon the methodology serves multiple purposes:

1. A model for thinking about standards-based teaching and learning;
2. A frame of reference for designing standards-based teacher preparation programs that prepare candidates to work effectively in standards-based schools;
3. A vehicle for practicing and obtaining feedback upon one's effectiveness as a teacher in a standards-based classroom (FORMATIVE evaluation);
4. A source of evidence to be used in recommending and granting a license to teach (SUMMATIVE evaluation);
5. A meaningful and defensible measure of a pre-service teacher's effectiveness as a facilitator of learning for use in related research.

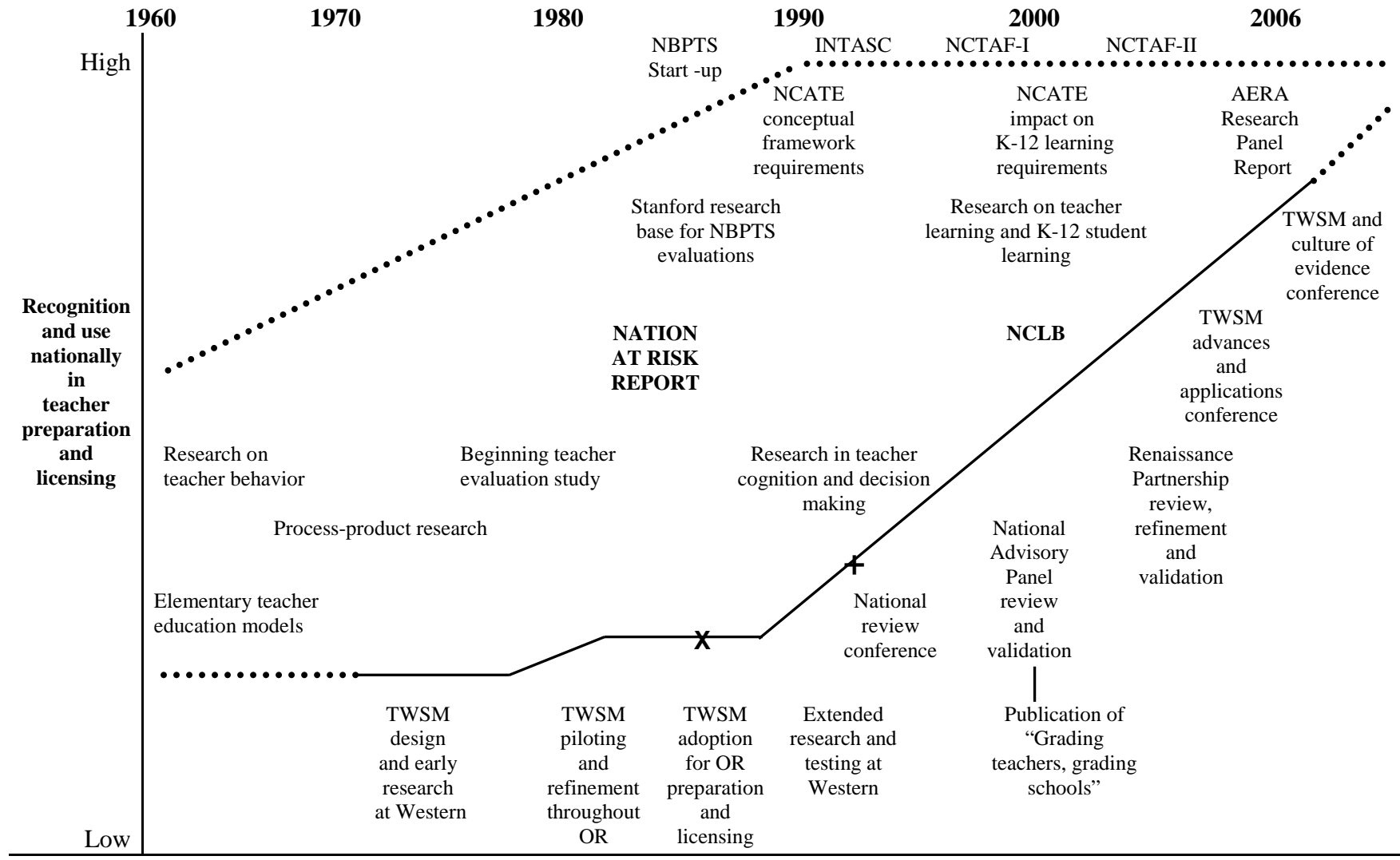
The Renaissance Partnership five-year research and development project devoted to refining and extending the methodology found all of these purposes to be well served.

A Long and Many-Sided Journey

DESTINATION: COHERENT THEORY, MEASURES, PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND RELATED RESEARCH THAT MEANINGFULLY CONNECT TEACHING, TEACHER PREPARATION AND K-12 LEARNING (CTPL Connections)



Two Paths Traveled that Finally Meet



..... The path of teacher knowledge, skills and dispositions

———— The path of enabling knowledge, skills and dispositions, *and* a teacher's impact on the learning of students taught

Lesson 1. The Core, Non-Negotiable Elements in Teacher Work Sampling

Elements	Specifications
Sample of work	The sample of teacher and pupil work studied must be of sufficient length and scope to permit the assessment of multiple dimensions of a teacher's work, and make the learning outcomes pupils are to accomplish of genuine importance to their long-term progress in learning;
Targets for Learning	The learning outcomes to be accomplished by pupils are to be carefully delineated, and are to vary in complexity and kind, for example, concept acquisition and the solution of multi-step problems in addition to factual information;
Measures of Learning	Key learning outcomes are to be accompanied by a description of the pre- and post-instructional measures to be used in assessing the progress pupils make in working toward their accomplishment, and instructional planning is to reflect findings from pre-instructional assessment;
Descriptors of Process	Information is to be collected and reported on the conditions and processes of instruction provided by a teacher during the course of the work sampled, and referred to as needed in interpreting and reflecting upon progress made by students in their learning;
Descriptors of Context	Information is to be collected and reported on the classroom, school, and community contexts in which teaching and learning occur, and referred to as needed in interpreting and reflecting upon progress made by students in their learning;
Analyses of Learning Gains	The learning gains made by pupils as a consequence of instruction are to be provided on a pupil-by-pupil basis, and summarized for selected groups of students, for example, pupils starting the unit with little vs. a great deal of related knowledge, or pupils who have English as a second language vs. those who do not; and
Reflection and Next Steps	A reflective analysis is to be provided by a candidate on his or her teaching and accomplishments with pupils, in light of the information reported in the sample of work as a whole, with teaching strengths and weaknesses highlighted and needs for continued professional development identified.

Lesson 2. Principles of Design for Teacher Preparation Programs that Wish to Incorporate with Integrity the Core Elements of Teacher Work Sampling

Principle 1. An instructional program needs to be aligned with and supportive of what candidates are asked to do, including the documentation and reporting that is required in completing a work sample.

Principle 2. School contexts that model and are supportive of what candidates are asked to do need to be available for practicum and student teaching placements.

Principle 3. A supervision, evaluation, and feedback system needs to be in place that provide guided practice in applying and carrying out the tasks teacher work sampling demands of candidates.

Principle 4. Judgments about a candidate's effectiveness as a teacher need to take into account the gains in learning made by every student taught.

Principle 5. Documentation of a candidate's effectiveness as a teacher needs to be accompanied by observations of practice and descriptions of context, as well as evidence of learning gains by students.

Principle 6. Multiple lines of evidence need to be considered in reaching a recommendation for licensure, only some of which come through teacher work sampling.

Principle 7. Multiple reviewers of evidence need to be involved in preparing a recommendation for a license to teach, only some of whom represent a teacher education faculty.

Principle 8. Evidence needs to be assembled and reported by a teacher education faculty on the confidence that can be placed in all lines of evidence collected through teacher work sampling that inform a licensing decision (the reliability and validity of information used).

Principle 9. A conceptual, as well as a contextual (school, district, state, national) map needs to inform and give meaning to an intending teacher of principles 1 through 8.

Lesson 3. Changes That Tend to Occur in Teacher Preparation Programs After Adopting Teacher Work Sampling

1. Because of the complexity of work samples, college faculty planning moves from focusing on a set of courses to a set of program expectations.

A corollary: Faculty often give up courses they designed to fulfill their own interests or philosophic views. (That is hard, particularly, for “stars”).

A corollary: It is difficult to find newly minted doctorates with any experience in working with work sample concepts, (or at a program rather than course level of instructional design).

2. Work sampling, with its clear expectations as to what students need to know, be able to do, and accomplish, brings clarity to program expectations.

A corollary: Preparing accreditation reports for groups like state licensing agencies and NCATE becomes easier with clarity of expectations, as well as the opportunity for more targeted program evaluation activities. (Deans, directors, and chairs like the change).

A corollary: Faculty who prefer to focus their instruction on the “art” rather than the “science” of teaching often rebel against clearly stated (“restrictive”) expectations.

A corollary: To provide faculty ownership to program structure, it becomes necessary to revisit program expectations every 3-4 years. (The rate new faculty are added to a program affects the frequency with which this cycle needs to occur).

3. Practice teaching becomes a more widely used instructional strategy within programs to ensure that students are able to meet the clear and demanding performance expectations that accompany teacher work sampling.

A corollary: Instructional practice activities afforded through simulated classrooms, such as provided by *Cook School District*, become helpful additions in preparing candidates to meet a program’s field-based expectations.

A corollary: With clear expectations for performance, formative assessment becomes a more common part of the instruction of prospective teachers. (Diagnosis becomes more specific and solutions rely less heavily on “another practicum experience.”)