

Section  
4

## Connecting the Task to Unit Assessment

### ***National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions***

*Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates met professional, state, and institutional standards.*

As Figure 1 on the following page reflects, the elementary language arts performance assessment directly aligns to NCATE standard 1 in the following elements:

Standard 1, Element 1: **Content Knowledge For Teacher Candidates**

Standard 1, Element 3: **Pedagogical Content Knowledge For Teacher Candidates**

Standard 1, Element 7: **Student Learning For Teacher Candidates**

Students must become aware of comprehension strands and their interrelationship (content knowledge). The task demands pedagogical knowledge in the analysis of the student work to inform instruction and in the creation of a lesson attuned to the needs of students. The task also demands content, pedagogical and student learning knowledge which clearly aligns with the competencies outlined in the CT Blueprint for Reading (which is aligned to IRA professional standards) and the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching.

NOTE: Although dispositions are not directly assessed by the task and would be difficult to validate, the workgroup believes that the task implicitly calls for demonstration of the disposition of professional commitment through the good faith effort in completing task and the communication of their belief of high and challenging standards for the students for whom they are planning instruction.

Figure 1 demonstrates the alignment of task prompts to:

- **Assessment Prompts in the Candidate Task Template (Artifact 3 in Section 2)**
- **Task Competencies Assessed (Artifact 3 in Section 2)**
- **Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT) (Appendix D in Section 5)**
- **CT Reading Blueprint Competency (Appendix C in Section 5)**
- **NCATE Standards (Appendix E in Section 5)**

Figure 1: Task and Competency Alignment Chart

Assessment Task Prompt	Competency Assessed	CCT	CT Reading Blueprint Competency	NCATE Standards
<p>1. Select question 17 or 18 about "Sybil Ludington" and analyze it in order to respond to the following prompt. Although these questions focus on the objectives of C. <i>Critical Stance</i>, they also require students to demonstrate their knowledge and application of other reading comprehension objectives in regard to A. <i>Initial Understanding</i> and B. <i>Interpretation</i> (see previous page for reading comprehension objectives and skills).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify one skill from A. <i>Initial Understanding</i> and B. <i>Interpretation</i> objectives that are necessary precursors to providing a critical stance response in question 17 or 18.</li> <li>Discuss how the skill you identified in A. <i>Initial Understanding</i> and B. <i>Interpretation</i> is related to critical stance.</li> <li>Discuss how question 17 or 18 exemplify critical stance.</li> <li>Provide a rationale for your answer.</li> </ul>	<p>I. <b>Knowledge of Reading Comprehension Objectives and Skills</b>—The teacher candidate demonstrates understanding of the three strands and sub-skills of reading comprehension in order to correctly analyze student work.</p>	<p>I. <b>B. Content Knowledge</b> 3. Teachers understand the central concepts, skills, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) they teach.</p>	<p>I. Effective teachers of literacy have a broad knowledge base about areas essential to effective literacy instruction.  E. 6. Have knowledge about assessment and know how to interpret and use the results of various assessments.</p>	<p>NCATE Standard 1, Element 1 Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates</p>
<p>2. Analyze answers to questions #17, 18 and 19 written by students 3, 7 and 10. Describe and prioritize the students' strengths and weaknesses in the demonstration of a critical stance. To support your written analysis, give specific evidence for each student and from the students' responses to questions #17, 18, 19.</p>	<p>II. <b>Analysis of Student Performance</b>—The teacher candidate effectively analyzes student performance in regard to reading comprehension in order to plan future instruction.</p>	<p>II. <b>C. Assessing and Adjusting:</b> Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate.</p>	<p>III. Effective teachers of literacy can assess children's competencies in key areas of literacy.</p>	<p>NCATE Standard 1, Element 7 Student Learning for Teacher Candidates</p>
<p>3. Based on your analysis of the student work in the area of critical stance, identify the most critical instructional need(s) of each student in the area of reading comprehension. You may list and describe the instructional needs in a bulleted list.</p>	<p>II. <b>Analysis of Student Performance</b>—The teacher candidate effectively analyzes student performance in regard to reading comprehension in order to plan future instruction.</p>	<p>II. <b>A. Assessing and Adjusting:</b> Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate.</p>	<p>III. Effective teachers of literacy can assess children's competencies in key areas of literacy.</p>	<p>NCATE Standard 1, Element 7 Student Learning for Teacher Candidates</p>
<p>4. Based on the identified instructional needs, select an instructional focus and plan a lesson for a whole class (which includes students 3, 7 and 10). Plan the lesson to be taught across 2-3 days or a total of 3 hours of instructional time. The lesson plan should address all levels of students' achievement (high, medium, low), and include the following lesson plan components a-d (a. Lesson objective, b. Materials, c. Teaching Strategies Selected, d. Assessment, and e. Modifications)</p>	<p>III. <b>Ability to Plan Reading Instruction</b>—The teacher candidate designs a lesson based on the analysis of student work that includes: (A) Logical and aligned lesson objective; (B) Selection and use of developmentally appropriate of materials (C) Selection and use of appropriate of reading comprehension strategies which build on developing a critical stance in relation to a text; and (D) Appropriate strategies for assessing students' performance.</p>	<p>II. <b>A. Planning:</b> Teachers plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum and the community. Teachers select and/or create learning tasks that make subject matter meaningful to students.</p>	<p>II. Effective teachers of literacy can teach important aspects of literacy well to a wide range of children. C. 2. They can teach comprehension effectively, in both listening and reading and use of comprehension strategies.</p>	<p>NCATE Standard 1, Element 3: Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates</p>
<p>5. Entire task</p>	<p>IV. <b>Communication Skills</b>—The teacher candidate demonstrates effective communication skills (writing) in the response to the assessment task.</p>	<p>I. <b>Content Knowledge</b> Teachers are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics.</p>		<p>NCATE Standard 1, Element 1 Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidate</p>

At each of the institutions deans and/ or department chairs have been apprised of the development of the assessment task during various phases of the project. In the initial phase of the project all deans and/or department chairs encouraged participation in preparation for NCATE accreditation. Each professor has plans to present their work to their departments and deans fall semester 2003. Because the project was finalized at the end of spring semester, however, plans are in progress (**Artifact 14 in Section 4**).

At CCSU the participating professor shared the assessment task with colleagues in Teacher Education at the end of the yearly retreat in May 2003 (**Artifact 15 in Section 4**). At this meeting discussion was focused on how and where to embed the assessment into the course sequence of reading classes. It was decided that the assessment would be embedded into RDG 316, the second course offered in a three-course reading sequence taken prior to student teaching. Suggestions were made to pilot the assessment in the Fall of 2003 to fine-tune it based on the institution's expectations and to review and adjust the related reading curriculum. Additionally, recommendations were made by the faculty to develop and pilot a similar task appropriate to the early childhood reading course sequence. Recommendations were made to change some of the language of the task to better align it with the content in teacher education coursework.

***NCATE Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation***

***The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the application qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.***

It is anticipated that the assessment task will impact program development and improvements across institutions. At CCSU it will require the revision of the RDG 315 and RDG 316 course sequence to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn skills and content being assessed across courses. This performance assessment will be embedded in the school of education assessment plan as a transition point assessment for elementary education candidates. It will serve to improve the continuity of assessments across the three reading course sequence along with performance assessments of reading (running records) and writing process. The data from this performance assessment will provide feedback to the reading department at CCSU that will serve to enhance and improve both curriculum and instruction.

The other institutions represented in the workgroup (Fairfield University, University of Hartford and WCSU) are at various stages of development of their assessment plans. Fairfield University and WCSU are still developing a conceptual framework and assessment plan and will have input on using this elementary language arts performance assessment as a transition point assessment. At the University of Hartford, the task will be presented to the school of education faculty in the fall with a proposal that it be used as a transition point assessment in the second of the two-course reading sequence. Therefore, decisions about how this assessment will be used at three of the four institutions where the assessment was piloted are in progress.

The fifth member of the workgroup representing SCSU teaches at the graduate reading specialist level and has communicated with colleagues at the initial teacher preparation level. However, based on conversations with various reading faculty who teach initial certification candidates there appears to be a lack of communication about revising the reading curriculum so that the competencies reflected in this assessment (which are aligned with state student standards and teacher standards) are embedded. Therefore, it is uncertain if or how this assessment might be used at SCSU.

Overall, the work resulting from this project yielded an assessment that all faculty felt were valuable, authentic, meaningful and significant to assessing and ensuring that elementary education teacher candidates demonstrate high level competency in their knowledge and skills of teaching reading comprehension prior to student teaching. It is important to note that having cross-institutional representation, the Title II grant funding and the focus and purpose of NCATE accreditation standards were critical and beneficial to the success of this workgroup in developing an elementary language arts performance assessment that was completed in just six months. Had the workgroup project been focused within one institution there might have been issues of resources and politics. Instead, each individual workgroup member brought to bear their own experience and knowledge base in reading and language arts in contributing to the development of an elementary language arts performance assessment that can be used and replicated at any institution in Connecticut.

Furthermore, all workgroup members agreed that this performance assessment represents what is expected and articulated in the NCATE standards as an effective transition point assessment for elementary education candidates. We hope that this workgroup has an opportunity to continue to meet and discuss the progress made in future implementation of this assessment at each respective institution.

**SECTION 4 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:**

**Artifact 14:** E-mails regarding plans to implement the assessment task

**Artifact 15:** CCSU Elementary/Early Childhood Education Division Meeting Retreat Agenda

From: Patricia Calderwood <pcalderwood@FAIR1.FAIRFIELD.EDU>  
To: Catherine Kurkjian <kurkjianc@attbi.com>, patricia calderwood  
<pcalderwood@FAIR1.FAIRFIELD.EDU>  
Cc: Joseph Gambini <Joseph.Gambini@po.state.ct.us>, kristina Elias Staron  
<kristina.elias.staron@po.state.ct.us>, Michael Alfano  
<ALFANOM1@southernct.edu>, Jean Klein <KJEAN588@aol.com>, Darla Shaw  
<shawd@wcsu.edu>, Ann Courtney <courtney@mail.hartford.edu>, Georgette Nemr  
<georgette.nemr@po.state.ct.us>  
Date: Sunday, May 18, 2003 5:41 PM  
Subject: Re: Report on Connecting to Unit Assessment

Cathy- you have my permission to quote this in its entirety for the report.  
However, please do correct any spelling or syntax errors I have overlooked. Pat

This task and assessment meets NCATE standard 1, as it is a means of assessing the development of candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions. It taps candidate knowledge of critical literacy skills and strategies, as well as knowledge of students' strengths, weaknesses and learning needs in critical literacy skills and strategies, as well as knowledge of child development (cognitive, social, emotional). It permits the candidate to display his/her pedagogical knowledge of teaching/learning strategies, including, but not limited to differentiated instruction, modeling, guided practice, etc. and offers the opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate how he/she understands this knowledge to be located in an ongoing professional conversation (through, for example, the use of professional language and resources). It offers the candidate to display skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation as she/he analyzes the students' strengths, weaknesses and learning needs, finding common patterns in learning needs, and choosing appropriate goals/objectives to meet these needs. Further skills, such as identification of a learner's zone of proximal development, are needed in order to carry out the plans designed as a result of the analysis. Pedagogical skills are called up in the selection of materials and strategies, arrangement of the learning environment, student groupings, etc. Assessment and evaluation skills and knowledge are evident in the formal and informal planned assessment and evaluation, and are evident, for example, in the delineation of criteria used in evaluation. There are more possible examples, but the above are sufficiently illustrative for this note. Dispositions are indirectly measured (although we did not consider them in our collective construction of the assessment template) in the thoroughness of analysis, reference to resources (which also indicates the dedication to doing this task well), the rationale for lesson plan elements, the way the candidate writes of the students' performances, the attention to multicultural education, differentiated instruction and other social justice/equity concerns, the ability to connect the task to teacher accountability beyond the CMTs- through reference to national and or state guidelines or benchmarks. Again, this list is illustrative and not exhaustive.

I will share this assessment tool and my alternative, preferred version with my departmental colleagues ( there are 5 of us in the department of curriculum and instruction) sometime next fall. We have concluded our spring semester as of this morning and will not meet again as a department until September 2003. I expect that they will give it serious attention, and will consider its merits as an additional tool in our assessment of readiness for student teaching. I also expect that this discussion will set the stage for conversation about what would make a fair and practical assessment package for us to use. The Dean will be pleased that such assessment tools are being developed, but she has never dictated the tools that any particular program will use. I do not anticipate

much interest in this assessment tool beyond our department any time soon, as we have 4 years until our next accreditation visit, and all of us are already pretty busy.

We also have not even discussed whether we are interested in seeking NCATE certification. From my personal point of view, there is a very high premium being placed on working to the NCATE formula, which is, frankly, not my cup of tea. I have seen much abuse of faculty who have been overworked getting ready for an NCATE review.

However, as the sole faculty teaching the elementary education literacy methods courses, and as the program director of the Graduate Program in Elementary Education at Fairfield, I have already made some decisions about this assessment tool, which I will put into place next year.

I will include the task as an assignment in my class, ED 531 Extending Literacy in the Elementary School, grades 3-6. It will be worth approximately 10-15% of the students' grade for the course. It is an appropriate task for pre-service teachers in my program to be expected to complete competently before student teaching.

I will not use the assessment tool that we constructed, however, as it lacks several elements that are important for my program- for example, explicit attention to multicultural education, whether the plan is situated in ongoing instruction, and several other elements. I also prefer to use a more detailed list of elements in each category. I have disagreement with the way that critical stance is parsed (see earlier email for fuller explanation). Finally, as evidenced by my students' collective performance, I need to include a developmental category between unacceptable and acceptable. I need 4 categories. I much prefer the assessment tool I designed to grade my students' work before our task force group met on Thursday. It is more finely-tuned to our institution.

This is not to say that the work of the group in designing the task and the performance assessment has not been valuable. It has helped me see where the needs of my institution and students do not match exactly what we could agree to collectively. In addition, I have gained some insight into how state administrators and consultants cooperate with higher ed and with teachers in schools.

I will be thinking about the evidence from this semester's students and from those who will do the task next spring. At that point, I will have a better sense of whether the program is providing learning opportunities that enable most (probably 90%) of the students to demonstrate an acceptable level of competence on this task. Only then would it be implemented as a gatekeeper along with our other evaluations. However, if a student does poorly on the task, odds are that he or she will also do poorly in the course IF the program is providing sufficient opportunity to be successful for most students. But there is not enough conclusive evidence yet.

I welcome advice from you all about this plan.

I hope that this is enough information to release my payment!

Pat Calderwood

On Saturday, May 17, 2003, at 06:44 PM, Catherine Kurkjian wrote:

Hi,

It is me again:) As I read the report template more carefully, I noticed Section 4 which relates to the summary report I asked you to complete (below) in which faculty must identify how the assessment will be embedded in their teacher education program.....

(3) A summary report of project activities, which includes but is not limited to a description of coordination of administrators and faculty of departments and/or schools, analysis of pilot study performances and its relation to the

teacher preparation program (a guidelines for the summary report will be detailed and issued to grantees upon approval). Faculty must identify how the assessment will be embedded in their teacher preparation program for long-range and ongoing implementation as part of the unit's (school of education's) assessment system.

Please take a look at Section 4 posted below. I believe that I need to answer this section not only for CCSU, but for your institutions as well. My dean asked me to participate and so my institution is invested in using this assessment for NCATE. Your institutions may or may not choose to do so.

At any rate I need to have something from you on section 4 in order to complete the report. This will probably mean a sharing of the assessment tool with an administrator. Sorry to bother you, but want to make sure we get this done before everyone goes their separate ways for summer. I want us to get paid for our efforts.

Thank you,  
Cathy

#### Section 4 Connecting the Task to Unit Assessment

Section Overview: One of the purposes of this grant project was to help your institution prepare for the new teacher education program approval process that will use the NCATE standards.

##### NCATE Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

- Describe the element of NCATE Standard 1 to which your performance assessment task relates.
- Explain how your dean or director is involved with the decision to institutionalize this task.
- Explain your plans and timelines for expanding this task, or building upon this task, for assessments in this content area and in other content areas.
- Explain how you will combine the information you gain from this assessment task with other assessments to make decisions about candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

##### NCATE Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the application qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

- Describe how the information you gather from this assessment will be used for reviewing the efficacy of courses, field experiences, and programs.

Recommended Supporting Documentation  
Unit assessment plan or map.

ANN

I am presenting the assessment to the teacher education faculty on Thursday. It will only be for their review. This is the last meeting until the fall. I will present the assessment, talk about it as an NCATE gate and a possible part of our data base. The faculty will not vote until the fall whether they want to see this as a gate or not. I will present it to my dean in another meeting, once the faculty see it. You have to realize that this is higher ed and process is all. So what I am saying to you is that I definitely intend to use this as an assessment in the second reading course EDR 345 and probably in the graduate course EDR 551. I very much would like the work samples from the River and the Washington , D.C. I would love to rotate these through those courses -- use one one semester and another the following semester. So they would be used in all sections of EDR 345 and possible the graduate EDR 551. In fact I would love a copy of the secondary one. I teach a content area reading course to secondary education majors (English) and I would love to use that assessment. I do think that Hartford will actually set this assessment up as an NCATE gate and that I would score these assessments with other people. I think we will also outline what the consequences will be for not passing( remediation or withdrawal). However, it will definitely be discusses at great length before any final decision is made. It is the nature of higher ed. If I had known about this earlier I would have discussed it at the April meeting and shared examples. Then people could have had think time and my final report and recommendations. Now that will be presented on Thursday. I have asked my chair to squish it in. But a vote will not be taken until the fall. Although you never know -- I am always ready for the unexpected so I might be surprised. Hope this is clear. I will let you know what happens after Thursday. I run from hartford to a very long school committee meeting on thursday night. Thanks, Ann

On Tue, 20 May 2003 16:43:28 -0400 "Georgette Nemr" wrote:

- > Ann, If you are using the assessment as a course based assessment then
- > it must be used in ALL sections of the course. It should not be used
- > solely in the course you teach.
- >
- > I will be glad to be present at the meeting with your dean and

## AGENDA

### Elementary and Early Childhood Education Division Meeting Retreat

**May 22, 2003 (Thursday)-- 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (with lunch!)**

(Will let you know "WHERE" SOON)

1. Cathy Kurkjian will talk to us about the Reading "critical stance" instrument that was recently piloted and what implications it has for our TC's.
2. Brief examination of Master's Action Research Capstone Final Projects and drafts
  - How can we better prepare our MS students to be successful in this capstone?
  - What developmental steps might be implemented in prior courses?
  - How do we share this work?
  - How do we evaluate the work?
  - How do we celebrate the work?
3. The CCSU Conceptual Framework lists 9 dispositions the unit strives to develop and the NCATE exit report (2003) notes that a weakness is our failure to assess those dispositions. (They are in fact correct!) We need to build ways to measure these dispositions by brainstorming leveled descriptions for these dispositions (e.g., *target, acceptable, not acceptable*):
  - Sensitivity to the rights of all children and youth in a culturally diverse society
  - Commitment to a shared responsibility for all the children and youth of our nation
  - Courage and a strong sense of moral conviction
  - A passion for the importance of teaching and learning
  - Willingness to look for ways to improve the status quo of education and a desire to seek practical and insightful ideas for improving schools
  - Willingness to take responsibility for his or her actions in the classroom
  - Respect for peers and a desire for them to succeed
  - Respect for families and the difficult job of parenting
  - Personal qualities that will earn respect
4. New Student Teaching Evaluation Instrument
  - Results of the pilot this semester
  - Identifying content and skills we want our graduates to have
5. Improving how we assess teacher candidates in field experiences over clusters (210, 315, 320, 420, Stud. Teaching).

We will look at the outcomes we want in each level's field experience and see how we can reshape our checklists and assessments – we need to help our TC's and cooperating teachers see how we expect growth in knowledge, skills, and dispositions over time.
6. Quick updates : 420 Midpoint Assessment and Student Teaching Exit Portfolio

--over--

7. **Please make copies** of your assignments/rubrics for spring, 2003 semester and give them to Nancy or Susan in the folders provided in today's meeting. We need to have the data no later than **mid-June** or the data fairy godmother will not aggregate your data!!! (Fairy contract specifies vacation after mid-June.....)