

Section

1

Introduction

An overview of the CCSU project

Our project has focused on developing performance assessments that can be used across programs at CCSU to assess candidate's for entry to student teaching and program exit.

The assessment for entry to student teaching is a timed task that focuses on assessing candidates' skills in analysis and assessment of student work, content pedagogy, differentiation of instruction, and lesson planning, in the content area.

The program exit assessment is a situated portfolio assessment that uses a common task and rubric to assess candidates' ability to plan, deliver, and assess sequences of meaningful instruction in the content area. As part of the portfolio, candidates complete an analysis of a videotaped lesson focusing on their treatment of subgroups in the classroom. Candidates also document their differentiation of instruction, assessments of and feedback on student work, reflections on practice, and goals for professional growth.

Both assessments use a common task and rubric. The stimulus materials for the entry to student teaching task vary by content area. The exit portfolio is completed in the student teaching setting and each content area is free to add any unique requirements and rubric elements that are needed in the discipline. Both assessments yield aggregatable data

Milestones of the CCSU project

Development of the Mid-Point Planning Assessment Task. During the 2001 spring semester, the Teacher Education Assessment Committee developed alignment charts and established the goal of developing programmatic performance assessments usable across content areas at midpoint/entry to student teaching and at program exit. From the beginning, the Teacher Education Assessment Committee was concerned that performance assessments be valid, fair and consistent; produce data that could be aggregated within and across programs; and be sustainable. The team recognized a need to develop assessments for both the midpoint and exit points but chose to initially focus on the midpoint/entry to student teaching assessment. Through much discussion, facilitated by the development of alignment charts and program folios, the team identified critical attributes that every student teacher should have before entering student teaching. The initial list of critical attributes included dispositions; content knowledge; knowledge and skills related to planning, delivery, and assessment of instruction; and reflection on practice.

The Teacher Education Assessment Committee spent considerable time discussing what might be assessed in a mid-point performance assessment and what form that assessment might take to provide both good program evaluation data and good individual progress decisions. The team decided that the focus for the systemic midpoint assessment should be analyzing student work, planning appropriate instruction, assessing student learning, and reflecting on practice. After exploring a number of assessment options that appeared to require overwhelming resources or be very difficult to deliver

fairly and consistently, the team decided to develop a sit-down assessment that reflected the unique demands of each content area in some fairly uniform format. We also concluded at that early stage that performances should be scored blind by more than one trained rater to insure fairness and consistency.

During the 2001 fall semester, the Teacher Education Assessment Committee focused on developing the mid-point performance assessment, aligning it with program outcomes, and piloting it with small groups of students who would be student teaching in the subsequent semester. A core group of programs evolved including physical education, English, special education, elementary, science, and history. Music, math, early childhood, and technology expressed an interest in becoming involved "later." Art chose to use a portfolio approach and business developed its own approach. (English later opted to pilot a content specific mid-point assessment developed by a cross-institutional Title 2 work group.)

The BEST portfolio provided us some format ideas for the mid-point planning assessment task. Each content area identified the appropriate assessment point in the program (the course in which students would be required to complete the assessment) and appropriate content for the assessment. The content needed to be something every teacher candidate in the discipline should have mastered and require an understanding of the discipline to plan a next lesson. Using a common format, we decided to give candidates contextual information on students, school, and curriculum, a lesson plan, work samples from two students in the planned lesson, and common prompt questions that required the candidate to analyze the student work and plan the next lesson. We used graduates' BEST portfolios and released CAPT items as sources of student work.

The development of the common prompt questions proved to be a very difficult task because it meant we had to use language that was appropriate for every program involved. This meant that every word had to be appropriate for each program. Despite these challenges (and the lengthy meetings they required), pilot assessments were developed in elementary education, special education, science education, physical education, and history/social studies education. We administered these pilot planning task assessments by computer in November 2001, allowing a two-hour test period. Each program asked a small group of students to participate in the pilot, trying to insure that they represented a range of skill levels. Pilot participants were all scheduled to student teach in the subsequent semester.

In spring 2002, we examined the pilot candidates' performance on the mid-point planning assessment task and were pleased to discover that students rated as strong by methods instructors generally did well on the task and vice versa. (The only exceptions had to do with dispositional issues that this assessment does not address.) We also discovered that we were not as clear as we thought and began the process, which would extend through the next year, of rewording the prompt questions. The format elements for the contextual information and plan seemed to work well and remain basically unchanged today; however, pilot participants were very insistent and unanimous that they wanted all the prompt materials (contextual information, lesson plan, and student work samples) in paper form rather than on the computer. Students indicated that completing the task on the computer was not a concern and the two-hour time limit seemed to be "just right." In reviewing responses, we quickly discovered that the final prompt question intended to evaluate reflection was useless. Student

responses made it clear that this question was so divorced from reality that it was not fixable – so we eliminated it in subsequent iterations of the task.

Team members also began to discuss what we saw in the pilot performances with other program faculty and a number of changes began to occur in programs based on informal assessment of responses. For example, elementary education revised EDTE 420, a pre-student teaching field experience, adding more preparation in analysis of student work and additional opportunities to analyze the needs of individual students. History adjusted both the methods course sequence and focus. As the 2003 program elementary program revisions were fully developed, faculty extended work in assessment of learning. In physical education, the methods instructors decided to adjust assessment within the course to place more emphasis on evaluation of individual work rather than group work. These program revisions based on pilot data are the first evidence that the systemic performance assessments would help faculty “close the loop” and improve programs.

At the close of the spring 2002 semester, available members of the Teacher Education Assessment Committee sequestered themselves for “summer camp” and developed a draft rubric for the planning task. The group also further refined the prompt questions. By the end of May 2002 the smaller rubric development group was ready to share a draft of the revised task and rubric with the full committee. Data from the initial pilot were aggregated even though the changes in the task created alignment problems between the first pilot data and the rubric. In addition to developing a draft rubric, the team set a tentative pass/fail standard to be tested in the fall 2002 pilot round.

In Fall 2002, the Teacher Education Assessment Committee expanded adding Spanish, mathematics, and music to the active portion of the committee. Work continued on the mid-point assessment task. Music continued to struggle with the issue of how to present a meaningful student work sample. Mathematics and Spanish developed assessment tasks in the format and piloted them for the first time in November 2002 while the original five areas did a second pilot at that time. In addition, early childhood chose to participate in the elementary pilot since that task fell within the certification range for their students and assessed key program outcomes. Most programs opted to develop a parallel form of the task for the second pilot. Each program piloted its task with every student enrolled in the identified pre-student teaching level course.

As we prepared to administer the fall 2002 pilot tasks, we also developed plans to identify and train scorers. We identified a group of scorers that included program faculty (members of the Teacher Education Assessment Committee and others), adjunct faculty, and public school personnel who had served as BEST portfolio scorers in the relevant content area. We conducted a one-day scorer training session that included some collaborative scoring. When we were reasonably confident that the scores would be reliable, we gave each scorer a set of responses to score and sent them off to do that. Each response was scored by at least two scorers. If there was a difference of opinion, we asked scorers to meet and discuss the issues and, if necessary, involved a third scorer. Throughout this process, we asked scorers to note any issues with the draft rubric or the pass/fail standard so the committee could resolve those issues before the spring 2003 round.

During spring 2003, we analyzed fall 2002 pilot midpoint planning task data and completed another round of piloting. In this semester, we administered the task online using WebCT in a secure testing environment. Students who do not pass the spring 2003 task must retake it to be eligible to student

teach. If a student fails the task a second time, program faculty will need to closely monitor and support that student in student teaching. At this point, we have scored all the tasks and reexamined the task and rubric. We find that the task works well and we made no revisions. We made some minor revisions to the rubric that we believe will promote more consistent scoring across programs. We are using summer 2003 to develop feedback letters for students. We will also review the draft rubric and the pilot pass/fail standard in the fall with a number of our cooperating teachers as well as CCSU faculty. The comparability of alternate forms of the mid-point task will also need to be assessed this summer. After we have revised the rubric and reexamined the pass/fail standard, we will need to repeat the fall 2002 cycle of drafting alternate forms, piloting with whole groups, training scorers, scoring, and aggregating data. We will also need to test a pilot system for giving students timely notification of their performance on the task and reassessing any student who fails the task. That will also be an opportunity to test a formal feedback system that quickly gets data out to programs. Tentative plans for a process to prescribe remediation will then need to be formalized.

Development of the exit portfolio task. In the late spring of 2002, a subgroup of the Teacher Education Assessment Committee developed a draft exit portfolio task to be completed during student teaching. In keeping with the commitment to sustainability, the Teacher Education Assessment Committee felt that the exit portfolio needed to be as simple and as generic as possible. This would allow use of a common rubric and common scorer training. It would also facilitate the aggregation of data and standard setting. A common portfolio task and rubric would allow each program to add any needed discipline-specific elements. The exit portfolio's major purpose was to document candidates' positive impact on K-12 student learning. To achieve this purpose, candidates were required to document their ability to (a) address individual and collective student needs in a sequence of instruction, (b) assess learning, (c) develop data-driven instruction, (d) deliver instruction effectively, and (e) reflect productively on their practice. The Teacher Education Assessment Committee reviewed the draft task and approved it for initial piloting in the elementary education program.

In fall 2002, all elementary student teachers completed the pilot exit portfolio as part of their student teaching seminar requirements. Using more than 50 pilot portfolios as the data source, a small team of committee members representing science, physical education, modern language, and elementary education met in January 2003 for a "winter camp" to refine the portfolio task and develop a draft scoring rubric. The revised task was posted to the web in January 2003 as a student teaching seminar requirement for all elementary student teachers. In February 2003, the draft exit portfolio rubric was made available to students to use as they prepared their spring 2003 exit portfolios. Science is also piloted the exit portfolio in spring 2003. We met in May 2003 to score and revise the exit portfolio task and rubric. The refined task and rubric will be used in the fall by science, elementary, early childhood, Spanish, history and physical education. We expect to do formal scorer training across programs and tentative standard setting in late 2003.

Proposed deliverables

We will deliver a generic performance task and rubric to be used as an entry assessment for student teaching. The task has been used for math, science, elementary, special ed, physical ed, history, and Spanish. We are also delivering the task and rubric for a generic exit portfolio situated in student

teaching and intended to serve as a program exit assessment aligned with institutional, Connecticut, and NCATE standards.

Members of your workgroup and their institutional roles

Member	Institutional affiliation	Role
Nancy Hoffman	CCSU	Chair, Teacher Education Dept.
Judith Bourell Miller	CCSU	Professor, Physical Education
Vicky Morley	CCSU	Professor, Physical Education
Steve Ostrowski*	CCSU	Professor, English
Joann Walker	CCSU	Professor, Special Education
Marsha Bednarski	CCSU	Professor, Sciences
Sue Seider	CCSU	Professor, Teacher Education
Vic Geraci	CCSU	Professor, History
Sandra Burns	CCSU	Professor, Sciences
Dorothy Lawrence	CCSU	Professor, Teacher Education
Robin Kalder	CCSU	Professor, Mathematics
Holly Hollander	CCSU	Director of Field Experiences
Gloria Caliendo	CCSU	Professor, Modern Language
Ed Manfredi		K-12 Teacher
Joseph Lawrence		Retired educator, CCSU adjunct
Vincenza Mazzone-McNulty		K-12 Teacher
Alice Luster		Retired educator
Mary Lyons		K-12 Teacher
Carlotta Parr*	CCSU	Professor, Music
Pat Foster*	CCSU	Professor, Technology Education
Dave Capella*	CCSU	Professor, English
Dick Arends*	CCSU	Professor, Educational Leadership
Karen Riem*	CCSU	Professor, Secondary Education
Cathy Kurkjian	CCSU	Professor, Reading
Georgette Nemr	CSDE	Consultant

* Indicates that the member attended meetings, reviewed materials and offered advice at some point in the process but was not involved in development or scoring

Collaborations with Arts and Sciences and K12 faculty

Arts and Sciences faculty members were major contributors to the entire process from the conceptualization of the tasks through task development, piloting, and scoring. CCSU has a long history of close collaboration between A &S and the Education faculty. Public school faculty was used less frequently and less formally. Some cooperating teachers reviewed tasks and prompt materials and contributed materials used to develop prompts. The PDS Coordinating Committee has reviewed and commended the work on several occasions. The standard setting that must be done in fall 2003 will need to involve a significant number of experienced cooperating teachers.