

## Section

### 4

# Connecting the Task to Unit Assessment

*Section Overview:* Eastern Connecticut State University is scheduled for an NCATE visit in October 2003. This project, funded through a Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant, will contribute greatly to helping our institution meet some of the NCATE standards. In particular, this project has allowed us to develop a system of assessment required for NCATE and has resulted in collection of some valuable data that we can share with the visiting team. In addition, it can serve as a model assessment as the University works to implement assessment systematically.

Beginning in Fall 2003, the proposed assessment task will be fully implemented at Eastern. Each candidate's work will be evaluated by an education faculty member, an arts and sciences faculty member, and a 7-12 educator. This will ensure that candidates will have important content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions before they go for student teaching. If teacher candidates fail to meet these expectations they will receive appropriate remediation. They will then have a second opportunity to pass the assessment before they can begin their student teaching.

The assessment task developed through this project is fully aligned with the ECSU Education Unit Conceptual Framework, as well as with professional standards such as Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCCT), INTASC principles, and NCATE standards. The candidates are required to demonstrate their subject area competencies (Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies) in this assessment task. Each assessment task will measure one or more of the following competencies from the CCCT:

1. Teachers understand how students learn and develop.
2. Teachers understand how students differ in their approaches to learning.
3. Teachers understand the central concepts and skills, tools of inquiry, and structures of discipline(s) they teach.
4. Teachers know how to design and deliver instruction.
5. Teachers recognize the need to vary their instructional methods.
6. Teachers plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the curriculum and the community.
7. Teachers select and/or create learning tasks that make subject matter meaningful to students.
8. Teachers use various assessment techniques to evaluate student learning and modify instruction as appropriate.

This assessment task will also provide data for the following NCATE standards and INTASC Principles.

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

- **Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates (page 14)**  
**Target:** Teacher candidates have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter that they plan to teach as described in professional, state, and institutional standards. They demonstrate their knowledge through inquiry, critical analysis, and synthesis of the subject.
  
- **Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates (page 15)**  
**Target:** Teacher candidates reflect a thorough understanding of pedagogical content knowledge delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. They have in-depth understanding of the subject matter that they plan to teach, allowing them to provide multiple explanations and instructional strategies so that all students learn. They present the content to students in challenging, clear, and compelling ways and integrate technology appropriately.
  
- **Student Learning for Teacher Candidates (page 16)**  
**Target:** Teacher candidates accurately assess and analyze student learning, make appropriate adjustments to instruction, monitor student learning, and have a positive effect on learning for all students.

### **INTASC Standards related to these Assessment Tasks**

Principle #1: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

Principle #2: The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.

Principle #7: The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

Principle #8: The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.

As mentioned previously, the Dean of Education and Professional Studies and the Dean of Arts and Sciences at ECSU have been fully supportive of this project throughout its entire period. They have received all the minutes. The Dean of Education and Professional Studies has also participated in some of the reflections. Both deans have received a copy of this report. Furthermore, the principal investigator of this project was the primary author of the ECSU Education Unit Conceptual Framework. It is also important to note that the ECSU Education

Unit Assessment Committee is chaired by one of the workgroup members in this project. Clearly, ECSU is committed to the institutionalization of this assessment task.

As previously mentioned, this assessment task will be fully implemented beginning Fall Semester 2003. The candidates will be informed that they will be required to pass this assessment task prior to student teaching. By May 2003, the Education Department will request a catalog change to reflect this new requirement for all secondary school teacher candidates both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. It is expected that the University Curriculum Committee will approve this catalog change by October 2003.

Clearly this is not the only assessment required for teacher candidates at ECSU. The data from this assessment, combined with data from other assessments, will be used to make decisions about candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The ECSU assessment plan is shown in Table 2.

As indicated in the table, the Education Unit will collect data and use them to improve courses, programs, and the unit. If the assessment indicates that the candidates have shown weaknesses in particular areas, those areas will be strengthened as part of the Learning and Teaching course and Methods courses, all of which are taught before student teaching. On the other hand, if the assessment indicates that there are strong areas in our program, those areas will be kept in the courses and programs.

Because this assessment task is highly valuable for our programs, we will initiate discussion to expand this task to other areas of certification. The discussion will begin in fall 2003 and will continue for several months. We expect that a similar task will be implemented in other areas of certification.

In addition to affecting the assessment of teacher candidates, the assessment developed through this project will serve as a model as the University seeks to implement system-wide assessment. The current assessment task and rubric, as well as the process required to produce them, were shared at ECSU's Assessment Summit on March 14, 2003. Documentation of this presentation is available on videotape.

**Table 2. Unit's Assessment System Schema**

<b>Transition Point</b>	<b>What (critical strand) is assessed?</b>	<b>How is it assessed?</b>	<b>Who assesses and monitors?</b>	<b>How are results used to improve programs/Unit?</b>
Entry/Pre-admission	CNK  DIV PRF	Cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.70 (B-) Passing scores on PRAXIS I Passing scores on PRAXIS II for graduate secondary certification candidates  Essay Three letters of reference Interview with faculty	Committee on Admission and Retention in Education (CARE)	Candidates are not admitted to the program unless they meet these assessment standards. The system allows the Unit to maintain standards and remain competitive among other teacher education programs.
During courses/ Pre-student teaching	CNK PDK INT TEC DIV PRF	Maintenance of minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 (B-) throughout coursework Grades of "C" or higher in all education courses Field experience evaluation by cooperating teacher and university coordinator	Course instructors and the Committee on Admission and Retention in Education (CARE)	Course changes leading to program and Unit improvement are implemented.
<b>Mid-point/Pre-student teaching</b>	PDK INT TEC DIV PRF	<b>Passing scores on programmatic performance assessment</b>	<b>Methods instructors</b>	<b>Candidates are given feedback and weak areas are strengthened in courses.</b>
Student teaching	CNK PDK INT TEC DIV PRF	Student teaching evaluation by cooperating teacher and university coordinator Portfolio assessment in the student teaching seminar	Cooperating teacher, university coordinator, course instructors, and the Director of Educational Experiences	Student teaching results and cooperating teacher feedback are used to improve courses, programs, and the Unit.
Exit/ Certification completion	CNK PDK INT TEC DIV PRF	Passing scores on PRAXIS II Completion of undergraduate degree and a major other than education with a minimum of 2.70 GPA Recommendations of cooperating teacher, university coordinator, and director of educational experiences	Director of Educational Experiences	Data on certification completion are fed back to course instructors and the Unit to improve programs.
Post-certification for master's candidates	CNK PDK INT TEC DIV PRF	Comprehensive portfolios for all candidates in graduate programs	Faculty members in the respective fields	Candidate strengths and weaknesses are considered to make changes in courses, programs, and the Unit.