

SECTION 4 CONNECTING THE TASK TO UNIT ASSESSMENT

NCATE Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Describe the element of NCATE Standard 1 to which your performance assessment task relates.

The performance assessment task that we have designed requires the candidate is asked to do two things: to analyze student (P-12) work; to create a lesson plan based on that analysis. It is intended to be implemented during the last course that the candidate takes in each respective certification program immediately prior to student teaching.

The task relates to elements 1 and 2 of standard 1 - Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates; Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates, respectively.

Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates

In addition to satisfying the All University Requirements for graduation, all undergraduate candidates in secondary teacher education programs must complete a major in their respective academic subject; all undergraduate candidates in the elementary program must complete a liberal arts major as well as cognate courses in content knowledge in elementary curriculum. Graduate students in secondary certification programs typically received a bachelor's degree in their respective academic subjects. Given the fact that our performance assessment task occurs immediately prior to student teaching, the candidate will have completed all required content courses in his/her specific program. Since content knowledge is a requirement for effective teaching (one cannot teach what one does not understand), the ability of the candidate to understand and correctly answer the specific CAPT item will allow the faculty in the specific program to assess whether s/he meets content knowledge expectations prior to student teaching.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Teacher Candidates

All teacher certification programs at Southern recognize that assessing student work and planning effective lessons based on those assessments are integral components of effective teaching in all subjects at all grade levels. As such, opportunities are provided for candidates in all programs to develop curriculum units and lesson plans, and to implement them in field experiences as well as in specific pedagogical courses through demonstration lessons. Given the fact that our performance assessment task occurs immediately prior to student teaching, the candidate will have completed all pedagogical requirements in his/her program. Since pedagogical knowledge is a requirement for effective teaching, the ability of the candidate to assess the student work in the specific CAPT item, to provide concise feedback to the student, and to develop a lesson plan based on that assessment will allow the faculty in the specific program to assess whether s/he meets pedagogical knowledge expectations prior to student teaching.

Explain how your dean or director is involved with the decision to institutionalize this task.

The School of Education and the School of Arts and Sciences are both involved in teacher certification programs at Southern. While all secondary certification candidates take their content courses in their respective disciplines in Arts and Sciences, their pedagogical courses are taken in both the School of Education as well as Arts and Sciences. Approximately ten years ago, the then respective deans of the two schools recognized the need for faculty from the School of Education and faculty from Arts and Sciences involved in teacher education to meet on a regular basis to discuss areas of common concern and to formulate policies that would be consistent throughout all programs. This led to the creation of the Articulation Committee, a standing committee made up of faculty from both schools involved in teacher education; the current deans of both schools also sit on the committee as permanent members. The decision to participate in the Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant has been wholeheartedly endorsed and supported by both deans; both deans have committed to the implementation of the assessment task in all certification programs in the fall '03 semester.

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.

The initial pilot was conducted during the spring'03 semester and involved students in elementary education, English, and science; the performance assessment task will be implemented in all teacher certification programs beginning with the fall '03 semester. Prior to this, the Title II Committee will meet to analyze the results of the pilot to determine whether anything in either the task, the prompt, or the rubric needs to be changed in any way. The faculty involved in this initial pilot are generally pleased with the candidate responses, and any changes will be a matter of fine-tuning. For example, all the elementary education students performed below expectations on the section of the task that related to prior student knowledge. It is believed that this was due to incomplete directions and explanation of this section by the faculty member who explained the task to the candidates rather than their lack of knowledge to complete that section of the task.

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.

The unit assessment plan that has been developed consists of four benchmarks or gates. This assessment task is intended to be implemented during the last course that the candidate takes in each respective certification program immediately prior to student teaching; the candidate is asked to do two things: to analyze student (P-12) work; to create a lesson plan based on that analysis. The assumption is that all candidates who have completed all required courses in their specific certification programs should be able to successfully complete the performance task. The data that will be gathered from this assessment task combined with assessments from gates 1 and 2 will enable the faculty in a certification programs to assess the readiness of the candidate to student teach.

NCATE Standard 2. Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

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

NCATE considers the assessment of candidate performance to be a major factor in determining the success of both the unit as a whole and of a teacher education program. The data gathered from this assessment will enable decisions to be made about each teacher education program and the unit as a whole; for example, if it is found that a significant percentage of the candidates in a specific program or in the unit cannot meet the lesson plan requirements of the task, the fault would seem not to lie with the candidate. Therefore, the faculty will be required to address the programmatic changes in the preparation of candidates that need to happen so that candidates will receive the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to complete the task. In a similar vein, if it is determined that there is a common weakness in all certification programs, it would be incumbent on the School of Education as a whole to develop strategies to address this deficiency.

Assessment Plan - Initial Certification

Gate 1: Entry to Program

- Pass Praxis I
- Minimum 2.7 GPA
- Letters of Recommendation
- Essay
- Other as Required by Program

Gate 2: Midway to Program Completion

- Minimum 2.7 GPA
- Paper/Project Reflection
- Self-Reflection Essay
- Other as Required by Program

Gate 3: Course Completion

- Minimum 2.7 GPA
- Analysis of P-12 Student Work
- Feedback to Student
- Lesson Plan Based on Analysis of Student Work
- Other as Required by Program

Gate 4: Program Completion

Minimum 2.7 GPA

Pass Praxis II

Reflection - Curriculum Unit Developed During Student Teaching

Self-Reflection Essay

Other as Required by Program