

Assessment Task
for
Teacher Candidates about to Begin Student Teaching

Quinnipiac University
Pilot Task
Fall 2002 (draft Working Version August)

Appendix D
"first draft"

This task is meant to help evaluate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teacher candidates for middle grades and secondary education in social sciences have acquired during their preparation for classroom teaching. In particular, since Quinnipiac University wishes to develop teachers and teacher candidates who excel in their classroom teaching the MAT Program has developed this task to assess the broad range of skills that will contribute to outstanding teaching. The task also will help Quinnipiac University teacher candidates be sure they understand and can meet the expectations of the Connecticut Core of Teaching (CCT) and the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework (Framework). Teacher candidates will complete this task in January, just before they begin their assignments as student teachers.

The MAT Program at Quinnipiac has identified several areas of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, based upon Frameworks and the CCT, that are particularly important to its teacher candidates as they prepare to begin student teaching:

- I. Familiarity with the Frameworks and the CCT.
- II. Existing knowledge in a particular content and theme area and the ability to research topics and find material appropriate for the classroom and for learner assignments. The knowledge and skill required in this task reflects the need found throughout the Frameworks and CCT that teacher candidates be able to guide and challenge learners in the specific disciplines of the social sciences, including of history, geography, civics and government, economics, and behavioral sciences. While teacher candidates will have knowledge in the areas addressed by the task, Quinnipiac University recognizes the inevitable fact that teacher candidates and beginning teachers will need to supplement their existing knowledge base with research in various content areas. This task recognizes the importance of that research skill. It also engages teacher candidates directly with the knowledge component of the "Foundational Skills and Competencies" of the CCT, particularly as they research and develop content, practice pedagogy, and plan their courses (CCT, p. 3), and the curriculum requirements in the Framework.
- III. The ability to develop unit plan outlines and lesson plans that are appropriate to the assigned topic and reflect an awareness of, and ability to address, the standards found in the Framework and to plan instruction in ways that conform to the CCT.
- IV. The ability to develop assignments and the means to assess those assignments that show an awareness of the ways in which the teacher candidate needs to challenge and guide learners while teacher candidates meet requirements found in both the various disciplinary content standards in the Framework and the CCT Skills and Competencies regarding "instructing" and "assessing and adjusting" (CCT, p. 3).

- V. The ability to recognize individual learning styles and “exceptionalities” and to develop appropriate and/or alternative assessment tasks for these learners if and when necessary. These skills are essential to the overarching goal of assisting all learners throughout the educational process as articulated in the Framework and the CCT.
- VI. As teacher candidates pursue the task, they also must keep in mind NCATE’s reminders about “Social Studies and the Nature of Learning.” They will pursue constructivist learning by helping students connect new ideas “with ideas they have already learned from previous experience,” they should endeavor to follow the five principles of “powerful social studies” (NCATE, p. 11). Quinnipiac particularly requires that its teacher candidates recognize that “[s]ocial studies teaching and learning are powerful when they are integrative,” and this task therefore asks that teacher candidates select material that crosses disciplines, subjects, time, and space, and that they integrate technology into their teaching plans (NCATE, p. 12). The requirement is also emphasized in the Framework “Program Goals.” That document requires learners to be able to describe and explain various concepts and events, but also that they be to analyze, compare, defend, and interpret (Framework). These skills require integrative teaching techniques.
- VII. The ability to reflect on this process, using critical thinking skills to evaluate the research process and the teaching process. By thinking through how they have approached the topic and implemented standards, as well as how they have addressed learner needs, teacher candidates will begin to develop career long mindfulness of the need to meet national and state standards, as well as the need to be responsive to learner styles. This element is particularly relevant to the CCT and its requirement that teachers engage in “Reflection and Continuous Learning” (CCT, p. 3).

The Assessment Task requires teacher candidates to respond directly to Connecticut standards as they use research techniques, planning skills, student evaluation abilities, and knowledge of students to prepare a unit and lesson plan for an assigned topic. They will develop a unit plan that highlights ideas to be covered as well as a specific lesson plan for one day.

The Specific Task:

Attached are three samples of student work. Use these to identify learning styles and “exceptionalities” in the students with whom you are, hypothetically, working and the types of material you will use in you classroom and in your assignments.

Follow the attached template. Also attached is model that will help you complete your own task. It is yours to keep—you need not return it.

Topic: The topic assigned for this task is: the United States Civil War

Student group: ** grade level, 25 students of average ability.
See attached samples of student work to evaluate individual background and learning styles.

Deadline: You have one week to complete the task. Return it to Kathy Cooke by **

Develop a product that has the following parts:

I. Project Information

A. The title of the unit plan.

B. Author Information

i. Name:

ii. Contact Information:

iii. Date: August 17, 2002.

II. Background

Briefly discuss your expectations regarding student cognitive development, "exceptionalities," and cultural factors in learning based on age, grade level, and sample student work. According to the CCT, these might include "learning differences, visual and perceptual differences, socio-emotional differences, special physical or mental challenges, and gifted and talented exceptionalities" (CCT, p. 5). Also address how you can make learning "constructivist" and "powerful," in the sense used by NCATE, for this group of students (NCATE, pp. 11-12).

III. A Unit Outline (no more than four pages, not including the bibliography) that includes

A. Objectives for the unit as a whole that reflect the K-12 Content Standards found on pages 2-3 in the Framework. These should address the following in particular:

i. Summary of Content Standards Addressed in Unit

ii. Essential Questions that will Promote Constructivist Learning and Reflect Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Issues in the Social Sciences

iii. Integrative Themes

iv. Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Skills that the Unit will Develop

B. Day-by-Day outline of the content and materials to be discussed in the unit. Refer this content directly to K-12 Performance Standards found on pages 4-27 in the Frameworks, as well as the summary list you created in III.A., that is, the summary of content standards, essential questions, themes, and skills that you will develop in the unit.

C. Complete bibliography of sources that you have used in preparing the outline, along with a brief, one or two sentence, description of each source. You must use supplementary materials, both technology based and print, to complement any text that you use.

D. Bibliography of sources students will use throughout the unit. You must use supplementary materials, both technology based and print, to complement any text that you use.

E. Assessment for the unit including a grading rubric or assessment list.

You may, but are not required to, include field trips, interdisciplinary activities with other teachers, simulations, and guest speakers.

- IV. A complete lesson plan (no more than 4 pages) for one subset of the unit, that is, for one class of 40-50 minutes, that reflects the NCATE Standards and the CCT as well as the expected cognitive development and exceptionalities of the students. For a complete lesson plan you must provide a statement of objectives, materials, initiation, development, closure, independent practice, and evaluation. Specifically, you must include:
- A. Objectives that reflect the “integrative” goal of “powerful social studies”—that is, that deal with material across disciplines, subjects, time, and space (NCATE, p. 12)—as well as the Framework and the CCT. Be sure to include specific reference to the Framework, the CCT, and the state frameworks for objectives related to the topic.
 - B. Materials that include a primary source reading component that supplements the general context and appropriately reflects the cognitive development and exceptionalities of the students.
 - C. Initiation properly aligned with the objectives of the lesson and cognitive development and exceptionalities of the students.
 - D. Development the objectives of the lesson and cognitive development and exceptionalities of the students.
 - E. Closure properly aligned with the objectives of the lesson and cognitive development and exceptionalities of the students
 - F. An independent practice that is related to the lesson, such as a quiz, test, or homework assignment.
 - G. Evaluation materials, such as a quiz, test, or homework assignment, including an assessment list or grading rubric. **Group Question—is this supposed to be for the Unit, and thus already included in III.E.?

Remember, each subset of the lesson plan should be appropriate for the age, level, learning styles, and “exceptionalities” of the students.

- V. A journal or reflective piece of writing (no more than 5 pages) that considers
- A. the process of evaluating the sample learner work
 - B. the reasons for the conclusions you reached about the learners based on the sample writing
 - C. the challenges of researching this topic
 - D. the challenge of creating an “integrative” lesson that deals with interdisciplinary themes
 - E. the reasons for choosing the material and the approach you selected
 - F. alternatives that might have been available
 - G. the Framework and the CCT
 - H. other issues related to the task that you found important to the process of completing this task.

Attached, for your reference, is a model for this task.