

Assessment Task for Teacher Candidates about to Begin Student Teaching

Quinnipiac University

Pilot Task

Fall 2002 (draft, September 10, 2002)

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 demonstrate that they 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 prior to beginning their assignments as student teachers.

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

I. Use appropriate content knowledge to guide instruction.

- A. Use existing knowledge in a particular content and theme area to plan a unit of instruction.
- B. Demonstrate the ability to research and locate material appropriate for the classroom and for learner assignments.

The knowledge and skill required in this task reflects the need found throughout the Framework 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. 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.

II. The ability to develop unit plan outlines and lesson plans. Unit outlines and lesson plans should:

- A. Be appropriate to the assigned topic.

- B. Reflect an awareness of, and ability to address, the standards found in the Framework.
- C. Plan instruction in ways that conform to the CCT.

III. The ability to develop assignments and the means to assess those assignments. Teacher candidates should:

- A. Demonstrate the need to challenge and guide learners.
- B. Meet requirements found in the disciplinary content standards in the Framework and the CCT Skills and Competencies regarding "instructing" and "assessing and adjusting" (CCT, p. 3).

IV. Demonstrate an understanding of "Social Studies and the Nature of Learning."

- A) Demonstrate use of the Constructivist approach to 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)
- B) Demonstrate the integrative nature of the social studies.

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 able to analyze, compare, defend, and interpret (Framework). These skills require integrative teaching techniques.

VI. 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).

In summary, 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.

Quinnipiac University Teacher Candidate Task: Writing a Social Studies Unit

General Information

Background:

For this task, you should imagine that you have been hired as a teacher in a Connecticut Public High School. The class to which you are assigned is a 10th grade mixed ability group. The course you will teach is an “academic” or college bound class designed for students of average ability.

Task:

Following the procedures outlined below, you will develop a unit plan and set of lesson plans for working with this class. [Name *the specific unit here* _____] In developing this unit of study you will follow guidelines and standards based on the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework, the Common Core of Teaching, and the best practices you have learned while at Quinnipiac. You also will be required to provide a reflective piece. Each of the requirements is outlined under the procedures that follow.

Audience and Purpose:

You are writing this unit for a team of Social Studies professionals who are playing the role of a Departmental Chair or building administrator in. Your purpose is to demonstrate your readiness for student teaching by incorporating skills from your pedagogy and content classes and the requirements of the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework and the Common Core of Teaching (copies attached).

Procedure:

Use the “Assessment Rubric” to self-assess your work in developing this unit. It is keyed to the requirements of this task. The first section of the rubric refers to each of the specific task components outlined below. The second section of the rubric is to allow for a holistic assessment of your overall work and follows the guidelines described in the introductory section. The Task itself is divided into six components outlined on the template below. The unit should be five class periods in length. A model unit (based on another class studying another time period) has also been provided. (It is yours to keep – you need not return it.) You have until _____ to complete the six components of the task. Return it to Kathy Cooke by _____.

Quinnipiac University Teacher Candidate Task: Writing a Social Studies Unit

Template

I. Project Information

- A. The title of the unit plan.
- B. Author Information
 - i. Name:
 - ii. Contact Information:
 - iii. Date:

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

- A. Unit Objectives (should 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 Framework, as well as the summary list you created in III.A., that is, the summary of

- i. content standards
- ii. essential questions
- iii. themes
- iv. 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
 - i. You may include any tests or quizzes to be used.

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

III. 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 standards from the Framework. 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. Clearly stated behavioral objectives that
 - i. state what the learners will do
 - ii. reflect the "integrative" goal of "powerful social studies"—that is, that deal with material across disciplines, subjects, time, and space (NCATE, p. 12)
 - iii. reflect the Framework and the CCT. Be sure to include specific reference to the Framework, the CCT, and the state Framework 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. Logical development of the objectives of the lesson including recognition of the 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—a group or individual learning task or a homework assignment.

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

IV. A journal or reflective piece of writing (no more than 5 pages) that considers

- A. the challenges of researching this topic
- B. the challenge of creating an "integrative" lesson that deals with interdisciplinary themes
- C. the reasons for choosing the material and the approach you selected

- D. alternatives that might have been available
- E. the Framework and the CCT
- F. 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, as well as copies of the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework and the Common Core of Teaching.