

Pilot Assessment Task for Teacher Candidates about to Begin Student Teaching "third draft"
Quinnipiac University, Fall 2002 (draft, September 11, 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 and who play a role in local, state, and national efforts to continue to move instruction forward, the MAT Program has developed this task to assess the broad range of skills that contribute to outstanding teaching and superior learning experiences among students.

As part of its underlying philosophy, the MAT Program at Quinnipiac recognizes recent scholarship about the teaching-learning process that emphasizes the need to for learner experiences to be "constructivist" and "integrative," and asks its teacher candidates to develop interdisciplinary concepts and essential questions as part of the content and pedagogy that will form classroom interactions. This task assesses teacher candidate development in these areas as well as their ability to meet the expectations of the Connecticut Core of Teaching (CCT) and the Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework (Framework). Teacher candidates will use their content knowledge, research techniques, planning skills, and understanding of different learning styles to prepare a unit and lesson plan for an assigned topic.

Specifically, in this task teacher candidates will develop a unit plan that highlights the general content for five lessons, formulate a detailed lesson plan for one day, and write reflectively about the experience of forming the unit and lesson plans and the alternatives that might have pursued. They are asked to focus the unit on a concept or concepts so they can display their integrative teaching skills and exhibit their constructivist learning techniques. They also are to relate the unit and lesson content to the Framework to show their understanding of state guidelines.

Teacher candidates will complete this task prior to beginning their assignments as student teachers. Candidates address the objectives of this task by:

I. Planning appropriate content knowledge and relevant interdisciplinary concepts to guide instruction. Teacher candidates will:

- 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 history, geography, civics and government, economics, and the 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. Demonstrating the ability to develop unit plan outlines and lesson plans. Unit outlines and lesson plans should: