

Section

4

Connecting the Task to Unit Assessment

Section Overview: One of the purposes of this grant project was to help your institution prepare for the new teacher education program approval process that will use the NCATE standards.

NCATE Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

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

The Quinnipiac University task relates to each element in this standard. Candidates demonstrate content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and social science practitioner skills. Through the task they plan instruction but also engage in research, demonstrating not only current knowledge but also the ability to continue to develop and reflect on their knowledge and skills as they grow and develop in their careers. The research process and efforts to develop interdisciplinary social sciences themes also begin to demonstrate the candidate's disposition as a social scientist. The task asks them to practice their pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions through the development of themes, the organization of a unit, the development of a lesson plan, and through the requirement that they directly address the standards.

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

The Dean has been directly involved in this project—she regularly attended meetings and participated in email discussions. We also addressed asked her to approve our work at key milestones, such as our decision to assess candidates at the pre-student teaching phase. Finally, we worked with Dean Dubea to be sure that the task we developed would fit precisely with the goals of the Division of Education at Quinnipiac University. This past involvement will substantially inform the institutionalization of the task. Dean Dubea herself will coordinate the institutionalizing of the task.

- 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 Dean will make these decisions, but I understand that she plans to implement the task

soon—probably as early as summer of fall, 2003. The task will inform graduate education courses directly, as discussed above. The results will also be used to strengthen the undergraduate and graduate content and methods curriculum and to use it as a template for tasks in other content areas. Initially the assessment task will be used for social science teachers in middle and secondary grades education, but at present Dean Dubea plans to use it as a template for assessment tasks in other content areas and grade levels.

- Explain how you will combine the information you gain from this assessment task with other assessments to make decisions about candidate’s knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

This task will be an important component of the overall evaluation of candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. In particular we expect that the Division of Education will coordinate this task with coursework, portfolios, and reports from classroom experiences to determine candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions for their particular teaching area. Together these instruments will help identify strengths and weaknesses in individual candidates, and will help the Division of Education develop teacher candidates and teachers who excel in classroom teaching and who play a role in local, state, and national efforts to continue to move instruction forward.

NCATE Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the application qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

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

We expect that the information that we gather as we use this assessment will be instrumental in the ongoing process of refining and developing the teacher education program. In particular, this task will allow us to consider how effectively our teacher candidates are being prepared in the course of their undergraduate education in the social sciences to become effective social science teachers. We expect that our teacher candidates will be well versed in the fundamental social science skills of research, evaluation, and coordination of diverse materials from a broad range of sources. We expect that our teacher candidates will also have been versed in how to apply these skills in a practical format. Should we find weaknesses in these areas, we will work with instructors in the social science disciplines at the undergraduate level to reinforce these basic skills. We will also undertake modifications to the graduate level courses in the individual social science disciplines should we find systemic problems in these areas among our students.

In the other area under evaluation in this task, the development and implementation of effective lesson planning, we will consider how to deepen teacher candidate understanding of these issues as developed in their graduate Methods I and II classes. Since the task will be undertaken by teacher candidates who are in the process of completing the Methods I and II sequence, the task will be an excellent way to check on the practical effectiveness of the

Quinnipiac University Methods sequence. We can use the task as a way to periodically reassess what the specific focus of the Methods I and II classes should be, and how much reinforcement of the skills and techniques covered in Methods I will need to be re-emphasized in our Methods II class.

Recommended Supporting Documentation

Unit assessment plan or map.