

Unit Assessment System: Eastern Illinois University

Rationale:

Traditionally, Eastern Illinois University like other institutions across the nation, has measured teacher education candidates' performance by judging their progression through courses and field experiences. Faculty grade assignments, evaluate a student's performance in field experiences and after accruing a given number of hours and completing program requirements, the candidates are deemed eligible for graduation. However, grades alone are not communicable to state/national accrediting and program approval bodies or to the P-12 community in which our candidates seek teaching positions (NCATE, 2003).

Eastern Illinois University has been NCATE accredited since 1957 and has prided itself on the quality of teachers it produces for the state of Illinois as well as the nation at large. For our accreditation to continue we must evolve in how, as an institution we judge our candidates' readiness and ability to enter the teaching profession. To maintain our accreditation, we must move from judging inputs as measures of candidate effectiveness to judging a candidates knowledge, skills, and dispositions against a set of common standards. For institutions within Illinois, standards include Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, Illinois Language Arts Standards, Illinois Technology Standards, and Illinois Content Standards.

Unit Assessment System – The Framework:

The Unit Conceptual Framework of professional preparation programs is the result of a shared vision, involving faculty and administrators in professional education programs, representatives from the campus community at large, the P-12 public school sector, and the University Council on Teacher Education. The framework reflects the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of highly qualified teachers and provides teacher education candidates a foundation in curriculum planning, instructional design and implementation, and summative, formative, and reflective evaluation.

The Unit Standards encompass the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (Illinois Special Education Standards for All Teachers are embedded), Illinois Content Area Standards, Illinois Language Arts Standards, and Illinois Technology Standards. These standards are organized and evaluated specific to the five knowledge and skill domains. In addition to Unit Standards, all program completers must meet specialty professional association standards (SPAS) of their major as well as Illinois Content Area Standards.

Like the Unit Conceptual Framework, the Unit Assessment System was designed with input from university faculty and administrators along with the P-12 learning community. The Unit Conceptual Framework as well as professional and Illinois Standards are at the core of an assessment system that continuously evaluates candidate performance using multiple measures at multiple points: Formal Application and Selection, University Approval to Take Teacher Education Courses, Formal University Admission to Teacher Education, Department/University Approval to Student Teach, and Completion and Follow-Up (See Unit Assessment Flowchart). Multiple performance assessments are used inclusive of product artifacts and field experience measures. Common performance assessments of all candidates include state test data (Illinois Basic Skills Test, Illinois Content Area Test, and Illinois Professional Teaching Standards Test), performance on the design of lesson plans/unit plans, content knowledge assessments that are specific to the major (includes a pre-student teaching field experience), a performance assessment that measures a candidate's impact on P-12 learners, and a student teaching evaluation. A common rubric will be used to evaluate candidates' performance on knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Implementation:

Date of Initiation: In Fall 04, selective pilot data will be collected from each phase in the assessment system for the purpose of examining the functionality of the rubric. Faculty members representing various disciplines will be contacted via e-mail asking them to use the unit assessment rubric. In addition, P-12 teachers in public schools will also be provided an opportunity to use the Unit rubric. Comments will be solicited from those individuals using the rubric as to needed revisions and refinement to the rubric. Reliability and validity of the instrument will also be examined.

In the Spring 2005, pilot data will be collected. Data will be collected from each phase of the assessment system. Consequently, programs need to be prepared and have identified 1-2 content knowledge assessments that will be incorporated into the Unit Assessment System. August 2005 will be the date for full implementation of the Unit Assessment System for all candidates enrolled in teacher education programs.

Data Storage Procedures: The storage system to be used for the Unit Assessment data is Live Text. Live Text is a portfolio/data management system that allows for the entering, storage and aggregation of data. Reasons for selecting Live Text are as follows:

1. Given the large numbers of teacher education candidates at this institution, any other data storage choice will result in significant monetary cost to the university, faculty, and administrators.
2. Numerous institutions in the state are also using Live Text which will allow for portability of the candidate's work samples if the candidate should ever leave Eastern to attend another Illinois university.
3. Community colleges are also leaning toward Live Text which will allow for our community college transfers to have a seamless transition into our Unit Assessment System.

4. Electronic portfolios can serve as support materials for students seeking employment in the teaching field.

While the university will not accrue monetary cost for the use of Live Text, our teacher education candidates will accrue a \$100.00 cost for using Live Text. Consequently, the teacher education candidates will own the license to Live Text not the university. The \$100.00 charge will permit candidates to use Live Text throughout their college experience plus one year following their graduation. At the conclusion of the one year mark following graduation, candidates who wish to continue their use of Live Text will have to resubscribe. For those candidates who discontinue use of Live Text, they will be able to download and save all data entries prior to the end of their subscription period.

As pilot data will be collected in Spring 05, candidates participating in the pilot will need to have access to Live Text no later than March 1, 2005. Effective August 2005, all teacher education candidates at this institution will be required to have purchased a license to Live Text during the semester they are in their first professional education course.

Data Collection and Submission Procedures: Data will be collected from the following performance assessments deemed essential by SPAs and NCATE:

1. Illinois Basic Skills Test, Illinois Content Area Test, APT Test
2. Pre-student teaching evaluation (completed during ELE 2000/MLE 2000 or ELE 2321; SPE 3201 or SPE 3220; SED 2000; PED 1500; MUS 2440; CTE 2000)
3. Lesson plan/Unit plan (completed during departmental methods –for secondary education candidates completion will occur in SED 3330).
4. Impact of P-12 learners (completed during departmental methods, but for some secondary programs this assessment may be done in student teaching).
5. Content Knowledge Assessment(s) (1-2 performance assessments specific to the discipline will be submitted). Please note these assessments may be assessments that are already being used for the purpose of program assessment.
6. Student Teaching Evaluation
7. Graduate and Employer Follow-Up Surveys

All test score data and survey data will be housed in the College of Education and Professional Studies Dean's Office. Pre-student teaching evaluation, lesson plan/unit plan, impact on P-12 learners, content knowledge assessment(s), and the student teaching evaluation will be submitted by the teacher education candidates into Live Text during the semester that the performance assessment is required to be submitted.

It is important to note that the performance assessment found in Live Text is the artifact from which the data is collected. Data will be acquired from a Unit rubric. If the faculty member evaluates the candidates' artifact in Live Text, the data will automatically be

entered and stored. However, if the faculty member decides to grade the artifact on paper, then the data will have to be entered into Live Text by the department. Regardless of how faculty members decide to go about evaluating the artifact, the candidates must still put the artifact into Live Text.

Training Needs: Faculty and students participating in the Unit Assessment System will require training in the use of Live Text. In response, Live Text has offered two free training sessions for faculty and one day of consultation at no cost. The purpose of the training is to establish a Unit Faculty Training Team with representatives across campus who would then serve as local trainers and contact people in respect to the use of Live Text. Representatives from Live Text will serve as an informational resource to members of the Unit Training Team at no cost to the institution. Once the training team has been developed, the team will then establish formal and informal mechanisms for faculty training. Formal training will begin in Fall 04.

Student training is also an issue. Given the number of candidates in teacher education, student training will need to take place in courses and in open lab times with a person available to answer and assist students. Sometimes the best way for training to occur is by mere exposure to Live Text at a time that is convenient for the person involved. To insure basic competence in the use of Live Text, we may want to consider making Live Text a component of the Technology Proficiency. Student training will begin Spring 05.

Communication Needs: Communication of the Unit Assessment has already begun. During Summer 04 and early Fall 04, meetings were set up with administrative councils inclusive of the Dean's Council and College Chairpersons across campus to present the Unit Assessment Framework and tentative ideas for implementation. Communication with faculty will begin Fall 04 via the Chair and Teacher Educators' forums, written correspondence being sent to department Chairpersons and faculty involved in teacher education. It is expected that programs share the written correspondence in advisement and transfer advisement sessions with students making them aware of the responsibility they have in the assessment process. Additionally, it is expected that course instructors also share the handout with students and discuss the performance assessments (as applicable) to be submitted as well as when and how assessments will be submitted.

Communication with candidates about their role in the Unit Assessment System is also critical. As stated earlier, candidates will be informed through written communication, advisement, and Admission to Teacher Education Meetings. Another communication need related to students deals with setting the expectation for candidates to meet standards. Communicating not only what is expected, but what will happen when the candidate fails to meet standards, will be the responsibility of all faculty members teaching professional education courses as well as departmental faculty teaching courses specific to teacher certification.

The Unit Assessment Committee recommends that the following statement be placed in syllabi of the following courses:

The statement reads, “Students who do not successfully complete the required performance assessments (*list specific performance assessments here*) will earn less than a “C” for the course.”

Courses to be included:

University Approval to Take Teacher Education Courses: ELE 2000/MLE 2000 or ELE 2321; SPE 3201 or SPE 3220; SED 2000; PED 1500; MUS 2440; CTE 2000

Formal University Admission to Teacher Education: SED 3330/EDP 3331 or SED 3100; ELE 3000 or ELE 3250 or MLE 3110; SPE 4800/4820

Department/University Approval to Student Teach: Departmental Methods courses

Completion and Follow-Up: STG 4001

For the candidate who does not meet standards on designated performance assessments, the candidate will have the option to redo the assessment. It is the department’s prerogative to decide the number of resubmissions permitted as well as the impact a resubmission has on a candidate’s grade. However, a candidate must meet standards to progress through the program of study.

Remediation opportunities must be provided to candidates who fail to meet standards and require resubmissions. For basic skill issues, a referral to the Writing Center, Reading Center, or Academic Support Services may serve as remediation. If the issue is a content/discipline specific or disposition issue, consultation with instructor and/or department Chairperson may serve as remediation. In cases where a candidate is advised to no longer continue in a teacher education program or the candidate no longer is seeking teacher certification, the candidate will be referred to the Counseling Center for career assistance.