

PRAC Proposal

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Title: *Assessing Beginning Teachers' Professional and Pedagogical Content Expertise through Portfolio Review*

Project Dates: January -- June, 2006

Abstract

This project will produce and evaluate a portfolio rubric used to assess professional and pedagogical content expertise of novice teachers in the Secondary Transition to Teaching Program (T2T). The portfolio review process will be piloted with 18 transition-to-teaching candidates who will be completing their program in June, 2006. This pilot will provide data on candidate preparedness that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the portfolio and improve the T2T curricular and experiential base of the program.

Purpose

As part of the candidate and program assessment being re-developed this year for the secondary Transition to Teaching program, the T2T Coordinator has designed a project to bring content area specialists from the School of Education, the School of Liberal Arts, the School of Science, and high school and middle school practitioners together to assess work sample portfolios produced by candidates in the secondary Transition to Teaching Program (T2T). The T2T program is a non-traditional, post-baccalaureate licensing program preparing individuals from other careers to become middle school and/or high school teachers, this year with 18 candidates. These portfolios will be used in a pilot project to reflect candidates' work during their two semesters in the T2T program, including both the middle school and high school levels.

While the general indicators of the rubric are defined by the School of Education's Principles of Teacher Education, the defined meanings of quality are not specifically designed to allow for credible and consistent ratings. Both the national beginning teacher standards (INTASC) and the Indiana standards for content area teaching will inform the development of the rubric.

The portfolio is not meant to provide sufficient evidence of ability to teach but is necessary to determine the candidates' abilities to use their knowledge in ways that support all learners. Other evidence gathered through observation and completion of course assignments ensures that multiple pieces of evidence are used to determine readiness for beginning teaching.

The project coordinator's qualifications for directing this project come from her previous work in large-scale writing assessment. She developed prompts and trained scorers for college level writing assessment. She also developed and directed the unit assessment system in her previous college position that included multiple forms of portfolio assessment, and she has nearly completed training as a scorer for the Indiana Beginning Teacher Internship Program portfolios in English/Language Arts. As the former president of the Indiana Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, she has worked with the Division of Professional Standards in multiple ways to ensure a state-wide strong beginning teacher evaluation program.

Outcomes

The project will

1. create the portfolio rubric for the T2T secondary candidates' work sample portfolios
2. pilot the review process
3. provide data on the professional and pedagogical preparedness of the T2T candidates as represented by the portfolios

Portfolio Contents: The portfolio will be a highly structured document similar to one candidates will be required to complete as part of their beginning teacher program, conducted in their second year of teaching. The portfolio will include work samples from units taught in the middle school and high school. They will be required to include student work samples with reflective analysis. The portfolio will be designed to require them to demonstrate their understanding of and ability to adjust to diverse developmental and cultural differences of students; their ability to create engaging work for students that focuses on understanding; and their ability to self-assess in order to improve their instruction based on student needs.

Rubric Development: The rubric will be anchored to the six Principles of Teacher Education (PTE's). They are Conceptual Understanding of Core Knowledge; Reflective Practice; Teaching for Understanding; Passion for Learning; Understanding School in Context of Society and Culture; and Professionalism. Prior to implementation, the rubric will be reviewed by several groups of individuals: the Secondary Teacher Education Committee; a review group consisting of a content area instructor in science, mathematics, history, English, and Spanish; and finally by members of the School of Education's CUME Performance Assessment of Student Learning network to ensure alignment with the goals of complementary program evaluation projects.

Assessment Methods

Participants in the pilot portfolio review will participate in training on the rubric's design and use. After the rubric is developed, each portfolio will receive two readings as part of the pilot. Raters will be asked to read the assigned portfolios and rate each with the rubric. There will be two scoring sessions. Participants will be paid \$25/portfolio.

Training for Use of the Rubric: Those participating in the portfolio reviews will be trained in the use of the rubric prior to a rating session. The training will focus on the meaning of terms in the

rubric and the variations in expected quality. The group will score one portfolio together to clarify the process. This 4-hour training will occur immediately prior to the actual scoring for each session. Training will occur in the morning with ratings in the afternoons. Raters will complete a survey regarding the process and content of the rubric, ease with which it worked, questions they had during the independent scoring.

Data Analysis to be Employed

Data to be reviewed includes the following:

- Inter-rater reliability

- Analysis of the raters' process comments

- Analysis of the ratings using the School of Education's PTE's

The rubric will be revised based on this analysis. The goal is to establish a workable portfolio review system to determine competencies of those completing the T2T program. Data collected from the reviews will be used as part of the larger program assessment plan to determine effectiveness of the curricular and experiential elements of the T2T program.

Evaluation and Dissemination of Results

Changes to the rubric will be implemented based on scorers' common problems and language miscues. Results of the data analysis will be shared with the Secondary Teacher Education Committee and the Performance Assessment of Student Learning Network. A proposal to present at the IUPUI 2006 Assessment Institute will also be submitted.

Intended Use of the Data

The data will be used as part of a larger program evaluation system being developed by the new Coordinator of Transition to Teaching Programs. The proposed pilot portfolio review process will provide key data assessing candidate preparedness. However, candidate and mentor

survey data are also being collected by the coordinator. Survey questions will include closed and open questions, using the PTE's as the anchor for both. Survey participants will be asked to rate themselves/the candidates' abilities as described by the indicators for the PTE's, using a Likert scale. The same surveys will be used for all parties in order to compare responses. With the portfolio review data, surveys, and student exit interviews, the coordinator will be able to assess the effectiveness of the portfolios in making changes in curriculum, program structure, and/or the program assessment plan.

Budget

The largest part of the funding will be used to provide a stipend of \$25/portfolio to each participant as well as a \$50 stipend for participating in the scorer training (10 scorers). Funds will be used to provide refreshments during the training and scoring sessions, and a stipend of \$750 will go to the project coordinator for time in the summer to analyze the data.