

Final Report

PRAC Grant: Assessing Beginning Teachers' Professional and Pedagogical Content

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Restatement of Purpose

As part of the candidate and program assessment being re-developed this year for the secondary Transition to Teaching program, the T2T Coordinator 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 17 candidates who completed the program. These portfolios were 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 informed the development of the rubric.

Summary of Activities

1. The technology for the project was supported by Julie Bohnenkamp and Susan Smith of the School of Education. They supported the development of the template for the electronic portfolio and met twice with the T2T interns in workshop.
2. A team of faculty and 6-12 teachers met to develop the portfolio protocol, rubric and review the portfolios. Included were education faculty in social studies, science, foreign language, mathematics, and English; liberal arts faculty in math and science; the Spanish MAT program; middle school and high school science and math teachers; one middle school social studies teacher; and two English teachers. The project was able to pay each of the participants a stipend for participation in the creation of the protocols and the rating of the portfolios.
 - The rubric was organized by the six Principles of Teacher Education and data are presented with the organization scheme. The specific indicators under each of the seven principles were used as indicators on the rubric, with some editing and revising because of how well the portfolio was/was not an valid approach for demonstration.
 - The candidates were rated on a 3 point scale: Needing Support, Developing, and Proficient. Raters used the U/D Undetermined category if the artifacts did not provide adequate evidence.
3. CUME provided technical assistance in compiling the ratings on each of the portfolios over the summer. Data were received in August.

Statement about Conclusions: Not every indicator in each principle was used as part of the rubric for the portfolio process. The portfolio is limited in its ability to reveal a complete portrait of the candidates' performance in teaching.

Findings Regarding Candidates' Competencies

1. Strengths of the Candidates
 - a. Candidates' ratings were strongest for (Principle 1) their conceptual understanding of core knowledge in their discipline (as evidenced by the artifacts) and (Principle 6) professionalism.
 - b. Ratings suggest that candidates demonstrated the following at a developing or proficient level:
 1. setting clear goals
 2. providing students with choices
 3. using multiple strategies
 4. encouraging learners
 5. drawing on students' prior knowledge
 6. aligning assessments with goals
 7. creating rubrics
 8. recognizing and supporting learners' intellectual, social, and personal growth.
 9. engaging learners
 10. supporting English language learners and students with exceptional needs
 11. conveying reasonable but high expectations for learner achievement
 12. providing all students equal access to learning
 13. communicating in ways that demonstrate sensitivity and respect to a broad range of diversity.
 14. embedding knowledge of school and community into teaching
 15. documenting standards-based practice in the classroom
2. Weaknesses of the Candidates
 - a. Indicators under Principle 2 indicated the most work areas and reflection for adjustment of the curricular piece. All indicators suggest the need for analysis of curricular experiences for candidates in the program.
 1. Candidates' ratings in *explaining the principles that guide the teaching* indicated that 25 percent were rated as "Needing Support" or "Developing."
 2. Candidates' ratings in *demonstrating teaching as an integrated process (e.g. assessing and planning based on developmental, cognitive, and content area needs)* indicates that 31 percent of the candidates were rated as "Needing Support" or "Developing."
 3. Candidates' ratings in *using differentiation (through assignments, activities and assessments)* indicated that 56 percent of them were proficient. However, 20 percent of them were categorized as "Needing Support."

4. Candidates' ratings in *learning about learners and teaching through reflective practice* indicate 57 percent of them were rated as "Needing Support" and "Developing."
 5. Candidates' ratings regarding *assessing learners' development as part of planning* indicated that almost 27 percent of them were rated as "Needing Support" or "Developing."
 6. Candidates' ratings regarding *assessing learners' knowledge as part of planning* indicated that nearly 50 percent of them were rated as "Needing Support" or "Developing."
 7. Candidates' ratings regarding *using assessment processes appropriate to learning outcomes* indicated that 50 percent of them were rated as "Needing Support" or "Developing."
 8. Candidates' ratings regarding *self-assessment with/from multiple perspectives in analysis* indicated that 53 percent of them were rated as "Needing Support" or "Developing."
- b. Principle 3 analysis suggests one indicator that revealed a weakness in performance of the candidates.

Candidates' ratings regarding *adapting/modifying the instructional approach based on the needs of the learners* indicates that 31 percent of them were rated as "Needing Support" or "Developing."

Findings Regarding the Process

- The three-point scale did not allow for enough differentiation across candidates' performances; the scale will be increased to four levels and specific language will be used for each level of quality for each indicator
- The U/D was selected far more often than expected; this suggests a mismatch between some of the indicators and the ability of the evidence to show performance; the writing prompts will be revised to target content more specifically for the candidates; indicators will be revised to discriminate levels of quality; artifact selection will be revised to ensure more alignment between selected pieces and the indicators.

Final Comments

The portfolio ratings suggest that the indicators from Principle 2 must be addressed with more experiential practice prior to the portfolio process at the end of the program. It is unclear whether the prompts created an inadequate picture or whether the artifacts were inadequate. However, the ratings do suggest that candidates proportionately scored lower on these indicators. Thus a review of the curriculum piece for high school teaching is required. Additionally, further emphasis will be given to presentation and analysis of student work, self-analysis of instructional and assessment practices, and differentiated instruction and assessment.