Assessment Report for the Core I Pilot Looking Back and Looking Forward Assignment

March 2016

The purpose of the Core I pilot Looking Back and Looking Forward assignment is to prime teacher candidates’ reflective practice and to help them establish measurable learning and professional development goals for their growth during fieldwork, pre-student teaching and student teaching (i.e., clinical practice). Specifically, this assignment intends to help students to engage in purposeful conversations with their cooperating teacher/mentor and university supervisor during their clinical experiences. In addition, students need to anchor their self-examination within the language of the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching standards. The assignment, along with others, is designed to help students to more fully and coherently articulate their professional practice, as related to the Education Unit outcomes.

Four questions are asked in the Looking Back: Reflective Practices:

1. Name and describe impacts the candidates have had on students' learning or growth.
2. Discuss ways in which the candidates have used feedback from their teacher education

program to improve their practice.

1. Identify a minimum of three CT Common Core of Teaching standards that the candidates view as their strongest attributes and discuss why. Identify the specific standards (not the domain) by name. <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320862>
2. Reflect on the next phase of clinical practice. Discuss any issues of concern and explain why.

Next, candidates are required to list two to three (2-3) professional goals for their next field/clinical experience, anchored by their Looking Backwards: Reflective Practice exercise. The goals should address areas of growth that they wish to develop as a result. Each goal should have a clear outcome (e.g., strengthen classroom management skills, increase confidence for instructional delivery, and work with three different groups of students). After the goals are constructed, they are also required to explain how each is aligned with a particular CT Common Core of Teaching standard (not the domain) and to establish one-three (1-3) strategy(ies) to fulfill each goal.

*Question Modifications*

To ensure the content validity of the instrument, the questions above for the Looking Back and Looking Forward Assignment were discussed at the CAEP committee meeting. Based on the feedback of the committee members on December 1st, 2015, the questions were revised to explicitly demonstrate that the assignment reflects unit wide outcomes. Although not piloted this time, a version of the same assignment for the advanced programs were also drafted and discussed.

*Sampling*

Candidates in all teacher education programs including both undergraduate and graduate initial certification candidates were piloted via relevant courses in their respective teacher education programs. After students completed and submitted the assignment, every fifth student was selected with a total of three students from each program. The sampling method mimicked the systematic sampling with the limitation of a small sample size.

*Methods of Analysis*

The CAEP committee members reviewed the selected assignments, took notes, discussed how well students answered the questions, and identified the patterns from students’ responses. The six CAEP committee members include an assessment faculty, the NCATE coordinator, faculty from the Elementary, Secondary, Early Childhood Education, and Health and Physical Education, the clinical and student teaching coordinator, and the Dean. Each sample received three reads by the committee members. Two questions were used to guide the analysis of the qualitative responses:

1. To what extent are candidates able to answer/complete each question/task?
2. What patterns, if any, exist among candidate responses?

*Findings*

1. Overall, the CAEP committee found that candidates’ ability of the answering the questions matched their level of clinical experience. Most candidates could answer the questions well. In addition, there was a good alignment of candidates’ concern with their goals and the corresponding strategies to fulfill those goals.
2. It was also found that candidates provided limited discussion of feedback from teacher education program to improve their practice.
3. For goal setting, candidates commonly identified a goal to improve confidence in teaching and to strengthen classroom management skills.
4. With regard to specific programs, one ECE candidate reported that he/she spent time in three different classrooms rather than one particular classroom. Another ECE candidate reported that she/he had not taught a full lesson during the clinical experience. Several ECE candidates demonstrated a challenge with regard to writing attainable goals.
5. There was a discussion that several of the ECE candidates did not align their reflections with the CCCT due to limited familiarity with the outcomes in comparison to these related to the content professional standards of NAEYC.

*Recommendations for programs*

1. Regarding the questions, the instrument should be clear. Specifically, the structured questions should be used so that candidates would not miss any of them.
2. The CCCT standards should be introduced to the candidates so they will become familiarize with them.
3. There is a need to clarify that impact on student learning was not limited to the current placement for Core I, but could be evidenced from other prior experiences.
4. The word “growth” may not be understood universally across the teacher education programs. Therefore, the recommended change to “development” was made. Accordingly, one assessment question could be changed as follows: Name and describe impacts the candidates have had on students’ learning and/or development (e.g., psychological, motor, sociological, executive function, self-efficacy, or persistence).