

PREPARATION FOR AN NCATE ACCREDITATION VISIT

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Abstract

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is a national organization structured to apply standards-based criteria in the assessment of Teacher Education Programs. The organization awards accreditation to those schools which meet or exceed standards of performance. The Teacher Education Program at Medgar Evers College was first accredited by NCATE in 2006. At the time of initial accreditation the program met rigorous standards, without conditions. To maintain accreditation the program is subject to a review every five years. Although teacher education programs in the education department are under review, the entire Medgar Evers College community must prepare for the visit, as an institution. The purpose of this session is to share best practice in the assessment of teacher preparation programs, as the programs prepare for an NCATE re-accreditation visit. Three years of qualitative and quantitative data will be prepared for the institutional report with reflections on the instructional strategies and organizational culture of the education department and the college. During this paper session, presenters will discuss data in such areas as: completion of certification requirements, graduation rates, New York State and national standards-based performance, and authentic assessment. Some discussion of the transition from paper to electronic portfolio process will take place. A special emphasis will be placed on the transition from face to face courses to an online platform, with samples of electronic resources used to support the process.

College-wide Preparation for NCATE

The process of preparing the entire institution for the NCATE visit was to ensure accountability of all constituencies. Preparation for the NCATE reaccreditation process started with Education Department meetings, and led to increasingly broader audiences, including the School of Liberal Arts and Education, and eventually the entire Medgar Evers College community. One of the issues addressed was the issue of grades and student achievement levels.

Literature Review

Adamy and Milman (2008) cited the work of Mokhtari, Yellin & Montgomery (1996) who presented professional knowledge development as a reason for the evaluation of

electronic portfolios in teacher education. They further cited Deitz (1995) and others when providing professional growth and reflective practice as a reason for evaluating electronic portfolios. Within the Medgar Evers Education Department the electronic portfolios will be used to assess the progress of the students, as well as, provide a mechanism for collecting data and examining artifacts which provide evidence of student performance. NCATE examines both quantitative and qualitative data on the Bachelors' Degree candidates. They conduct a longitudinal study following the performance levels of teacher candidates from sophomore through senior years.

Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative Data

Domain I: External Assessment

New York State Teacher Certification Exam (NYSTCE)

Table 1

Exam Title	Number Tested*	Number Passed	Pass Rate
ATS-W	12	12	100%
CST-MS	12	11	92%
LAST	12	12	100%
CST-SD*	10	6	60%

Domain II: Portfolio Assessment

Students are required to submit a pre-professional portfolio for faculty assessment prior to entering the Bachelor of Arts Degree Programs in Education. The Bachelor's Degree candidates are then required to present professional portfolios at the conclusion of their studies in the Bachelor of Arts of Education Program.

Domain III: Early Field and Clinical Assessment

Assessment 504 – Webquest

Quantitative Data

Spring 2008

Candidates demonstrate a combination of skills using knowledge acquired in their core courses and their pre-professional Education Department courses by developing a Webquest to be implemented in a classroom as a part of their Early Field Experience requirements. Webquests provide teachers with the ability to enhance learning by integrating technology into the learning process by providing children the opportunity to solve a problem or research an issue by using the Internet. Data below reflect candidate performance (92% completed the project) based on the standards recorded following Table 2.

Table 2

N = 39

Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Competent	Exemplary
8%	9%	21%	63%

Fall 2008

During the third semester of teaching the course, the instructor carefully examined the quality of work, and applied higher standards when grading materials. During the Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 semesters transitions to partially online, sections of the course were conducted. During the summer of 2009 the researcher attended a conference sponsored by the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE).

N = 38

Unsatisfactory	Emerging	Competent	Exemplary
21%	8%	45%	26%

Qualitative Data Reflections

The assessment system involves the early field experience for the course, which allows the application of specific techniques in the classroom. Each semester each faculty member is expected to write a reflection of each course he or she taught, indicating strengths and challenges of the course. After reflecting on the work, exemplars of emerging, competent, and exemplary work will be examined by NCATE team members conducting the re-accreditation visit. The researcher first taught *Computers in Education* during the Fall 2007 semester. During the Spring 2008 semester, the pre-requisite exam was administered after students registered for the course. The original purpose of the exam was to determine readiness for the *Computers in Education* course; however, it was used to provide the instructor with information about teacher candidate basic knowledge of technology. It informed the instructor about the initial levels students were functioning on.

By the fall of 2009, students' performance levels in the design and implementation of electronic materials in the classroom were consistent with their performance levels for entry into the Bachelor of Arts Program. In the Fall 2009 semester, a number of updated articles, promoting new technologies, were used to introduce students to a broad range of technologies to enhance classroom instruction and management. One example was the *bee bot*, a miniature robot used to engage early childhood students in pre-math skills such as counting and categorization.

Domain IV: Program Assessment

Data for the program assessment is based upon alumni and employer responses to a series of surveys and focus groups.

Domain V: Dispositions Assessment

Students are required to submit documentation citing evidence that they exhibit the following dispositions:

- enthusiastic about learning and teaching
- respects diversity
- reflects on practice
- believes in social justice, is ethical and honest
- resourceful and responsible
- open to constructive critique
- builds rapport with the learning community
- caring and committed