Assessment #5: Assessment of Student Learning
Assessment of Student Learning Project

1. Assessment Description

The candidate's effect on student learning is based on the results of a specific assessment of student learning project completed during student teaching. This project is designed to cover and assess NCTE **Standard 4**. In fall 2005, the English certification program had only one student teacher. This student was required to complete this project as a pilot so the assignment could be revised and refined to ensure that it would provide the necessary data. The pilot was run, slight revisions were made, and the project was required for all ten of the candidates finishing the program in spring 2006.

2. Alignment of Assessment with NCTE Standards

- As Step One of the project describes, candidates must select a unit for assessment that includes the three areas of Content Knowledge—reading literature **(Standards 3.5.1, 4.8, 4.9,)**, writing and analyzing language in communication **(Standards 3.2, 3.4.1-2, and 4.7),** and critical thinking **(Standard 2.4).**.
- In Step Two, candidates must demonstrate their understanding of their students, including issues of culture and learning ability **(Standard 2.2 and 4.4).** They must also show how they created an effective learning environment (**Standard 2.1**).
- In Step Three, candidates must discuss the context of this project with their cooperating teachers (and team members if they are working on a team) **(Standard 1.3),** so that they can select the best instructional materials for their students **(Standard 4.1).**
- In Step Four, candidates must devise an assessment tool to determine students' prior knowledge about the content, and then in Step Seven they must assess students' learning during the unit. Candidates integrate their assessment into their instruction **(Standard 4.10)** by establishing criteria for assessment and interpreting the results of the assessment instrument. Candidates assess the effectiveness of their instruction **(Standards 3.1.2, 3.3.3, 4.1)** by analyzing three student samples **(Standard 4.10).**
- Step Five requires that candidates design instructional plans to facilitate student learning **(Standard 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8).** All candidates are observed during the assessment project (Step Six) so this project is also a part of their field experience **(Standard 1.2-3).**
- Finally, in Step Nine, candidates analyze the results of the project and their own effectiveness as instructors using the Danielson rubric, thus showing reflective practice **(Standard 2.3).**

3. Data Findings

As the data show, the quality of these projects was outstanding. Although candidates were encouraged to keep the projects small, most saw this as an opportunity to prove their effectiveness as teachers and to create a showcase piece for their professional portfolios. Some organized the project so that it began at the start of their student teaching experience and ended four months later so the student learning they were

assessing was cumulative. Some designed the project so that it could enhance other aspects of their teaching such as creating projects that could be used to decorate the room for parent-teacher conference night. The progress their students made was a source of pride for all the candidates.

Three candidates struggled with samples. This was a matter of failing to plan carefully enough so they would have the material they needed. In one case, it was a matter of a janitor unknowingly throwing out the student samples.

The only part of the assessment they did not succeed in was the Danielson analysis. Since the projects included a good deal of reflection, this seemed to be some sort of misunderstanding of the assignment. Attaching the Danielson rubric to the assignment should solve this problem.

4. Evidence for Meeting Standards

The quality of the projects meant that the standards designed to be covered by this project were met, particularly all of **Standard 4** on pedagogy, particularly the integration of instruction (**Standards 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)** and assessment (**Standard 4.10**). However, the scope of this project also meant that candidates were teaching students how to read and discuss literature **(Standards 3.3, 3.5, 4.5, 4.9);** how to write, revise, and use language to communicate **(Standards 3.2, 3.4, 4.7, 4.8);** and how to think critically **(Standard 2.4).** Candidates were also analyzing the context of their teaching, thereby increasing their awareness of how issues of culture, gender, ethnicity, race, and ability affect teaching **(Standard 2.2, 4.4),** as well as how they need to create an environment in which all students can learn **(Standard 2.1).** This project also involved interacting and planning with the cooperating teacher **(Standard 2.3).**

5. Assessment Documentation

5a. Assessment Tool:

Description Assessment of Student Learning Project

The purpose of all teaching is help students to learn whether that learning is of some particular content knowledge, certain skills, or certain attitudes about life or language. At some point during this semester, you will need to document your assessment of how well students have learned something you have taught them. You may select an entire unit, a specific long-term project, or a cluster of lessons and activities. You will turn in one copy of this assessment to me and a second should be placed in your portfolio.

Components of the Assessment Project

Step One: Select a unit or portion of one of your classes for this assessment. Your plan for this unit must involve the teaching of literature, must include a writing component including drafts, and must engage students in critical thinking.

Step Two: Describe the class and analyze its composition in terms of the learning environment: class grade and ability level, ethnicity, special needs, the title of the class if it is an elective, class size. Also, explain any particular strengths and challenges of this class, the ways in which they have responded to different kinds of instruction before this, or anything else that distinguishes this class from your others and that you will need to take into consideration in designing your lessons.

Step Three: Explain how the content of this project fits into what has been taught so far in this class and where the students are headed in their learning. You may explain this in terms of the school or the

cooperating teacher's curriculum. Make sure that you place this project into the context of their progression of learning throughout the year/semester and in terms of state standards that are being met.

Step Four: Before beginning this project, you will need to devise an assessment tool that will inform you of students' current level of understanding. This may be a pretest of skill level or content knowledge, formal observations of behavior, a formal interview with your cooperating teacher, an evaluation of previous projects they have completed, or any other method that will allow you to assess students' understanding of what you will teach before the project begins.

Step Five: Write a unit plan for all the lessons included in this project. The lesson plans for each day should follow the "Plan for the Day" section of the lesson plan format we used in Methods and include a rationale, goals and objectives, materials, activities and procedures, closure, and inclusion.

Step Six: You will need to arrange for one of my visits to take place during this unit so that your project will include a Danielson observation form from me. Your cooperating teacher should conduct one of his/her formal observations during this project, also, and that observation form should be included.

Step Seven: You will then devise a way to assess what the students' learned during this project. You may use any of the assessment strategies we have discussed, but it needs to contain the same information you asked for at the beginning of your project in Step Three. You will need to provide a copy of your assessment tool and a copy of the rubric/grading criteria you used to evaluate their work. You also need to provide a brief explanation of why you chose this assessment tool and how you designed the rubric.

Step Eight: You will need to provide a copy of three student samples (a high, medium, and low) along with the feedback you provided them. Write a brief analysis of the differences among the three outcomes, how these differences might relate to the students themselves, and how they relate to the methods you used. What might you have done differently to improve student learning?

Step Nine: Using the Danielson rubric, reflect on this project and what you learned. What would you change about what you did to achieve better results? If the results met or exceeded your expectations, reflect on why you think the plan worked so well.

5b. Scoring Guide

Out of the possible 40 points (40-35=A, 34-30 =B, 29-25=C) candidates needed to achieve a minimum of 25 to pass; the lowest score was 30.
Numbers in left column indicate NCTE standards being met.

Rating Indicator	**1** **Little or No Evidence**	**2** **Limited Evidence**	**3** **Clear Evidence**	**4** **Clear, Consistent, and Convincing Evidence**
Selection of unit Literature (3.5.1) Writing (3.4.1-2) Critical Thinking (2.4)	Unit selected does not incorporate literature, writing, and critical thinking	Unit contains all three areas but they are not well integrated	Unit contains all three areas and they are logically linked	Unit carefully incorporates all three areas so they build on each other and clearly promote student learning
Class description (2.1)	Distinguishing characteristics of this class are not clear	Some distinguishing characteristics are discussed but full picture of class is not presented	Class is described thoroughly	Detailed descriptions of the class clearly indicate an in-depth awareness of students and their learning

				environment
Project Context (1.3, 4.1)	Context of unit is not stated	Context is stated but not analyzed	Context is described in terms of curriculum and standards	Context is explained thoroughly, related to students' learning process and progress and to state standards
Pre-assessment (4.10)	Pre-assessment does not establish clear criteria for measuring learning or does not correspond to final assessment	Pre-assessment criteria are vague or only partially correspond to final assessment	Pre-assessment criteria are clear and match final assessment	Pre-assessment criteria are carefully chosen to provide maximum information about student learning
Lesson Plans (4.1) Rationale Goals Materials Activities Closure Inclusion	One or more parts of the lesson plans are not completed	All parts of the lesson plan are present but not completed in a careful or thorough manner	All parts of the lesson plan are complete, clear, and logical	All parts of the lesson plan are designed carefully so as to maximize student learning, promote critical thinking, writing skills, and an understanding of literature
Observations (1.2-3)	Danielson observation forms are missing	Danielson forms are predominantly NI	Danielson forms are predominantly ME	Danielson forms are predominantly ME and EE
Assessment (3.1.2, 3.3.3, 4.1) Tool Rubric Explanation	Assessment tool does not establish clear criteria that are reflected in the rubric, correspond to pre-assessment, and is not explained	Assessment tool, criteria, and rubric are not clear, do not correspond to pre-assessment, and are not explained thoroughly	Assessment tool, criteria, and rubric are clear, correspond to pre-assessment, and are explained	Assessment tool clearly shows what students have learned based on pre-assessment, establishes clear and meaningful criteria for evaluation that are outlined on the rubric, and the process in thoroughly explained
Student samples Analysis (4.10)	Three samples are missing, not clearly distinguishable in terms of levels, and/or not analyzed	Three samples are included but not clearly distinguishable or analyzed for improving student learning	Three samples are included, clearly distinguishable into high, medium, and low categories, and include an analysis of differences	Three samples are clearly illustrating what defined successful learning and analyzed thoroughly in terms of the students and necessary revisions needed to optimize student learning
Danielson reflection (2.3)*	Danielson form not used or	Danielson form used but analysis is	Danielson form completed and	Danielson form thoroughly

	analysis not completed	not thorough or analysis thorough but Danielson not used	used as a guide for reflecting on the results	completed and used as the basis for reflective practice

*For complete Danielson rubric see Assessment 5.

5c. Data

N = 10. Number represents candidates scoring at each level on the item at left

Rating Indicator	**1 Little or No Evidence**	**2 Limited Evidence**	**3 Clear Evidence**	**4 Clear, Consistent, and Convincing Evidence**
Selection of unit Literature, Writing, Critical Thinking				10
Class description		1	1	8
Project Context				10
Pre-assessment			2	8
Lesson Plans	1		1	8
Observations				10
Assessment		1		9
Student samples Analysis	2	1		7
Danielson reflection	1	5	2	2