

Assessment 3: Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

1) Assessment Description:

Methods students complete four lesson plans, a unit plan, and teach a practice lesson for the Methods students in the class. All of these are practice activities in preparation for their fieldwork during which they need to teach four lessons to students at their placement site. The Methods instructor conducts a formal observation of one of these four lessons and evaluates students based on a rubric. The rubric is meant to evaluate the **skills** that are essential to the successful teaching of a lesson: providing a context for the lesson, using time well, having a clear focus and purpose and a carefully crafted plan, using appropriate and effective methods so that students are engaged in the learning, providing clear transitions so the class flows and a clear sense of closure to the lesson, and giving clear instructions. In addition, one item on the rubric provides information about **content knowledge** and two items provide information about **dispositions** (Classroom Presence and Professionalism).

The first way in which this information is used is perhaps crude, but essential. It is the way in which students discover if they can actually do this job—stand up in front of a classroom of students and deliver an effective lesson. If they cannot complete this task, the rubric becomes the basis for a conversation about whether the candidate should go any further in the program. In this cohort of students, the one student who performed below an acceptable level dropped out of the program after Methods.

If the lesson is not particularly successful, but is acceptable, the assessment often leads to modifying the student's plans, e.g., changing the student teaching placement from high school to middle school or to a school that is closer to the College or where other student teachers are being placed so more support will be available.

2) Standards Met:

The supervised fieldwork is part of the completion of their program (**Standard 1.1-2**). They work with a cooperating teacher in the field and their Methods instructor. (**Standard 1.3**), and the fieldwork serves as one of the benchmarks for their continuing in the English Education program (**Standard 1.4**).

Skills: This assessment focuses on **Standard 4.1** because students must select appropriate curriculum, methods, and materials to meet the needs of the particular students they are teaching. They must also successfully manage the class through effective teaching and student engagement (**Standard 4.2**). In addition, **Standard 2.1** is addressed in that students are assessed on how well they engage students in their learning, and **Standard 2.4** because this shows how well they can design and implement instruction. Finally, students' use of language is assessed corresponding to **Standard 3.1.7** concerning "their own effective use of language" in teaching.

Knowledge: One element of the rubric assesses Candidate Knowledge (**Standard 3.0**) of whatever material the students are teaching. The fact that this is only one element out of fourteen is meant to reinforce the idea that, no matter how well they know their subject, if

they cannot communicate that knowledge, they have not yet learned how to teach. The focus on this assessment is on skills.

Dispositions: Students are also assessed on how well they assume the teacher role and behave in a professional manner. An analysis of how well they can assume this role leads to their designing, along with their instructor and cooperating teacher, “a well-conceived plan for professional development” (**Standard 2.3**). Again, this is the time when a candidate’s ability to succeed in student teaching is assessed.

3. Data Findings:

The data show that the vast majority of students who reach this level in the program belong there and are headed for success. Eleven of the fifteen students exceeded expectations for their first formal observed and assessed lesson and were, therefore, judged sufficiently ready for student teaching. Three others were meeting expectations. Two of these students struggled during student teaching, but succeeded with additional support. The one student who fell below the acceptable level withdrew from the program.

4. Evidence for Meeting Standards:

- Most students have received enough instruction in Methods and enough teaching practice in the Methods classroom to succeed in the field. They have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need at this point in the program.
- The highest rate of success was in language use, showing the importance and value of our required Descriptive Grammar course.
- Students struggle with smooth transitions and need more work on giving clear instructions—not the least bit surprising for new teachers.
- Students’ content knowledge is fine but could be improved. Again, this is not surprising for new teachers, most of whom are relieved just to have successfully navigated their way through the lesson.
- Students had a clear, strong classroom presence. Their professionalism could be improved by dressing and speaking more professionally. Current fashion and lack of formality in speaking are getting harder to change in one semester.

5. Assessment Tool

Assignment from Methods syllabus:

Four Lessons

In addition to the observations, you will need to teach four lessons. If whole period lessons cannot be arranged, do mini-lessons, but try to teach on four separate occasions.

For each of your lessons, you will need to turn in:

- Your **lesson plan**: When you are actually teaching, you are no longer following anyone else’s formula for creating lesson plans. You need to write down whatever you need to get you through that lesson successfully, and you need to turn in to me what you actually used.

- **A self-evaluation:** After you have completed the lesson, you need to reflect on it and explain what went well and what didn't, what you expected and what actually happened, and how you might adjust the lesson were you to do it again.
- **A written critique:** You need to ask your cooperating teaching to critique one of your lessons. Occasionally, a teacher will not want to do this. In this case, you need to have a conversation with the teacher about your lesson, and you need to turn in the notes you take during this conversation. This critique may be just informal observation notes or may be recorded on the evaluation form I will provide.
- **My observation** of your teaching: I will need to come to observe you teach once during the semester. Since our schedules may conflict, let me know as soon as possible what days you will be teaching. You will be evaluated based on the same rubric we have been using for your in-class teaching.

Rubric:

Methods Teaching Observation Form (4.1)

Rating Indicator	1	2	3	4
Context (4.1)	Context not provided	Context Provided		
Time (4.1)	Clearly did not have enough material or had too much material for the allotted time	Nearly stayed within time allotted but did not have clear sense of closure	Began and ended an appropriate (for the time allotted) lesson on time	Designed a lesson whose goals could be completed in the time allotted
Focus (2.4)	Lesson was trying to cover too much material or lacked clear and attainable goals	Lesson needed a sharper focus	Lesson had clear focus	Lesson was focused, with clear goals
Planning (4.1)	Planning not evident	Planning evident but not careful enough for a successful lesson	Planning evident and contributing to a successful lesson	Planning enabled the lesson to run smoothly and reinforced goals
Purpose (4.1)	Purpose of lesson unclear	Purpose stated but not evident in lesson	Purpose clear	Purpose clear and significant for the content or students
Methodology (4.1)	Methods chosen did not help students to achieve goals	Methods chosen were interesting and engaging but not clearly connected to goals	Methods helped achieve goals	Methods clearly designed to achieve goals
Knowledge of Content (3.0)	Solid knowledge of material not evident	Some questions about knowledge of material	Knowledge of material evident	Detailed knowledge of material evident
Transitions (4.1)	No smooth transitions	Some effective transitions	Clear transitions	Smooth and logical flow from one activity to the next
Language Skills (3.1.7)	Noticeable errors in writing or speaking	Some errors in writing or speaking	Writing and speaking virtually error free	Effective use of oral and written language
Engagement (2.1, 4.2)	Class is teacher-centered, and not engaging	Class loses students' interest at times	Students engaged in learning for most of the time	Students are actively engaged in their own learning

Instructions (2.4)	Unclear	Somewhat clear	Clear	Clear and purposeful
Classroom Presence (2.0)	Teacher role not evident	Moves in and out of teacher role	Teacher role maintained	Strong classroom presence commanding attention and building rapport
Professionalism (2.0)	Lack of professionalism in dress, language, interaction, organization, and attitude	Professionalism evident in some areas	Professionalism evident in most areas	Professionalism evident in dress, language, interaction, organization, and attitude
Closure (4.1)	Lesson just ends	Ending rushed or not clearly related to lesson	Ending draws lesson to logical conclusion	Closure planned and integrated so as to reinforce the lesson

Data from Assessment

Teaching Skills

Rating Indicator	1 Unacceptable	2 Needs Improvement	3 Meets Expectations	4 Exceeds Expectations
# of Students Achieving Each Level				
Context (4.1)		2		13
Time (4.1)		1	1	13
Focus (2.4)			3	12
Planning (4.1)			4	11
Purpose (4.1)		3	1	11
Methodology (4.1)		1	1	13
Transitions (4.1)		1	7	7
Language Skills (3.1.7)			2	13
Engagement (2.1, 4.2)			3	12
Instructions (2.4)		1	5	9
Closure (4.1)		1	3	11

Content Knowledge

Knowledge of Content (3.0)		1	7	7
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Dispositions

Classroom Presence (2.0)			3	12
Professionalism (2.0)	1		6	8