

Assessment 3: Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions Methods Teaching

1) Assessment Description

Candidates in the Methods course complete four lesson plans, write a unit plan, and teach one practice lesson for the other Methods students in the class (ESEC 385). All of these are practice activities in preparation for their Methods fieldwork (ESEC 386) during which they need to teach four lessons to students at their placement site. The Methods instructor conducts a formal observation of one of the four lessons taught at the placement and evaluates candidates based on a rubric. The rubric is meant to assess 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 assesses information about **content knowledge** and two items assess information about **dispositions** (Classroom Presence and Professionalism).

One purpose of this first formal evaluation is perhaps crude, but essential. It is the way in which candidates 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 most recent cohort of candidates, for example, the one student who performed below an acceptable level dropped out of the program after Methods.

A lesson that receives an acceptable rating but is not particularly successful, often leads to a modification of the student's plans, e.g., changing the student teaching placement to a school that is closer to the College or where other student teachers are being placed so more support will be available.

2) Alignment of Assessment with NCTE Standards

The supervised fieldwork of Methods is part of the completion of the candidates' program (**Standard 1.1-2**). Candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates are assessed on how well they engage students in their learning, and **Standard 2.4** is met because candidates must design and implement instruction. Finally, candidates' 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 candidates 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 of this assessment is on skills.

Dispositions: Candidates 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 candidates who reach this level in the program belong there and are headed for success in their student teaching. Eleven of the fifteen candidates exceeded expectations for their first formal observed and assessed lesson and were, therefore, judged sufficiently ready for student teaching. Three others met expectations. Two of these candidates 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

Standard 1 Candidate Program Structure: Successful completion of classroom teaching in the schools for the fieldwork course (ESEC 386) is one of the benchmarks of the program (**Standard 1.4**). The very high scores on planning (all candidates meeting or exceeding expectations) demonstrate that the candidates are able to work with a cooperating teacher, since taking over a class for this lesson must be carefully arranged with the teacher in the field and the lesson must be approved by the teacher. Second, the candidates must also collaborate with the Methods instructor to arrange for her observation (**Standard 1.3**). The success of the teaching methodology (14 out of 15 meeting or exceeding expectations) demonstrates candidates’ ability to transfer what they have been learning (theory) to the classroom (**Standard 1.1-2**).

Skills Standards: All fifteen students met or exceeded expectations for engaging students in their learning (**Standard 2.1**), and the high scores in the methodology and instruction categories (all candidates but one meeting or exceeding expectations) indicate success in their ability to “design and implement instruction” (**Standard 2.4**). All candidates met or exceeded expectations in their ability to use correct grammar in teaching (**Standard 3.1.7**). In terms of Standard 4.1, while twelve out of fifteen candidates communicated the purpose of their lesson, three did not. While this is a major focus in Methods, some candidates still struggle at this stage to articulate the rationale for their lessons. The high scores on engagement and instruction in these lessons demonstrate candidates’ ability to create interaction and manage a class to promote a classroom community (**Standard 4.2**).

Knowledge Standard: Fourteen out of fifteen candidates met or exceeded expectations for content knowledge. Candidates are informed by their cooperating teachers what they will teach, so candidates are not allowed to choose material they are most comfortable with. These scores demonstrate candidates' ability to acquire the knowledge they need to teach successfully (**Standard 3.0**).

Dispositions Standards: All but one student met or exceeded expectations in the two categories measuring dispositions (**Standard 2.3**). All candidates had a strong classroom presence and behaved professionally in this key moment in their professional development plan in which they must successfully navigate the four-part relationship (cooperating teacher-college supervisor-student teacher-students) that is essential for successfully completing student teaching.

The effectiveness of this assessment tool is demonstrated by the withdrawal from the program of the student who fell below expectations in eight of the fourteen categories.

5. Assessment Documentation

5a. Assessment Tools

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.

5b. Scoring Guide

Methods Teaching Observation Form

Rating Indicator	1	2	3	4
Context	Context not provided	Context Provided		
Time	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	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	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	Purpose of lesson unclear	Purpose stated but not evident in lesson	Purpose clear	Purpose clear and significant for the content or students
Methodology	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	Solid knowledge of material not evident	Some questions about knowledge of material	Knowledge of material evident	Detailed knowledge of material evident
Transitions	No smooth transitions	Some effective transitions	Clear transitions	Smooth and logical flow from one activity to the next
Language Skills	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	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	Unclear	Somewhat clear	Clear	Clear and purposeful
Classroom Presence	Teacher role not evident	Moves in and out of teacher role	Teacher role maintained	Strong classroom presence commanding attention and building rapport
Professionalism	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	Lesson just ends	Ending rushed or not clearly related to lesson	Ending draws lesson to logical conclusion	Closure planned & integrated so as to reinforce lesson

5c. Data

N = candidates in ESEC 385/86 (Fall 2005)

Data represent the number of candidates scoring at each level on the assessment

Teaching Skills

Rating Indicator	1 Unacceptable	2 Needs Improvement	3 Meets Expectations	4 Exceeds Expectations
Context		2		13
Time		1	1	13
Focus			3	12
Planning			4	11
Purpose		3	1	11
Methodology		1	1	13
Transitions		1	7	7
Language Skills			2	13
Engagement			3	12
Instructions		1	5	9
Closure		1	3	11

Content Knowledge

Rating Indicator	1 Unacceptable	2 Needs Improvement	3 Meets Expectations	4 Exceeds Expectations
Knowledge of Content		1	7	7

Dispositions

Rating Indicator	1 Unacceptable	2 Needs Improvement	3 Meets Expectations	4 Exceeds Expectations
Classroom Presence			3	12
Professionalism	1		6	8