

A Vision of an Integrated Assessment System for the Teacher Education Initiative

Goals

Our goals for the assessment component of the Teacher Education Initiative are to develop an integrated assessment system that:

- focuses on *teaching practice* grounded in professional and disciplinary knowledge;
- traces teaching practice as it develops over time;
- addresses multiple purposes of a broad array of stakeholders; and
- creates the foundation for programmatic coherence and professional development of those who work with beginning teachers.

Conception of Assessment Currently Guiding the Work

In the preparation of teachers, assessment is needed for multiple purposes from admissions through the first years of teaching: to provide clinical feedback on student teachers' practice, to support self-assessment, to help teacher educators decide "what to do next" in planning instruction, to track progress over time, to make consequential decisions about readiness to teach, and to evaluate the teacher education program. Different purposes require different configurations of evidence of student teachers' learning *and* the factors that shape it.

The assessment system, embedded in diverse learning environments, will involve multiple—designed and naturally occurring—opportunities to engage in and observe teaching practice over time; and a shared language for guiding and analyzing practice that names different aspects of the practice and describes increasingly sophisticated levels of performance. Sources of evidence will include multi-media records of student/beginning teachers' practice over time that can be analyzed and deployed to serve multiple purposes of different stakeholders.

We are distinguishing two major sets of purposes for assessment activities: (1) those assessment activities that support teaching and learning *within a course* or other learning opportunity and that are the responsibility of the instructors; and (2) those collaboratively developed "culminating" assessment activities—records of practice plus evaluations--that are *also* intended to be shared and incorporated into the *program level* assessment system. Both sets of purposes will be guided by the TEI curriculum framework, the complex teaching activities entailed, and a shared language for describing practice. These will be developed, primarily, by the Subject-Specific Teaching and Learning Teams and the Cross-Cutting Workgroups.

The program level component of the assessment system might provide two inter-related data bases: (a) one that houses multi-media records of practice for student teachers collected over time from admissions through the first years of teaching and (b) one that houses analyses of those records, including narrative analyses, scores reflecting the qualities of the teaching observed, and codes reflecting contextual factors that shape that performance. These data bases can be used for making and warranting consequential decisions about readiness to teach, for program development and evaluation, for inquiry into the validity of the assessment system for different purposes, for accountability to outside stakeholders, and for research into the development of beginning teachers. A long range research goal is to be able to describe and trace learning trajectories for student teachers over time.

The assessment system can be characterized as one drawing on mixed methods: (a) methods that support clinical and deliberative judgment of designed and naturally occurring teaching activities (which we might call ethnographic) and (b) methods that support aggregation, comparison, and modeling (psychometric). Questions of validity for different purposes are taken up by structuring multiple opportunities for corroboration and challenge across multiple observers and sources of evidence.

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Some Challenges for the Assessment of Teaching Practice

Teaching practice takes place in complex educational environments that pose a number of special challenges for assessment development and evaluation. Among these challenges are how to meaningfully, usefully, and fairly evaluate teachers' practice when multiple aspects of context vary in ways that cannot be fixed in real school contexts. These include variations in the content being taught; the prior learning experiences of the teachers' students; the school, classroom, and home cultures of the teachers' students; the resources and policies of the schools and districts in which teachers are working; and so on. Thus teaching practice and assessment of teaching practice necessarily involve multiple types of interactions that must be understood and addressed in developing interpretations about quality and putting them to work to improve teaching and learning.

Accomplishments and Plans for 07-08

Our assessment development work centers on "high-leverage" domains of teaching practice. So far, we have begun development work in elementary mathematics (funded by the National Science Foundation) and, more recently, in elementary literacy education (with a seed grant from CRLT). Both projects build on powerful learning/assessment activities already developed by faculty who teach in the relevant methods courses. Taking a cue from the TEI Curriculum Group, we have begun work in the domain of "Leading a Discussion" with (a) sequences of increasingly complex teaching tasks integrated across the methods and student teaching semesters and (b) a shared language for guiding/analyzing practice that names different aspects of the practice and describes increasingly sophisticated levels of performance. In mathematics, faculty responsible for the methods courses and the student teaching semester are already collecting students' records of practice and using them to help develop an analytical language for leading a discussion; and we have begun work in the domains of planning and assessment. In literacy, plans for gathering and analyzing records of student teachers' practice in "Leading a Text-Based Discussion" will be implemented next term.

Participants, So Far, In the Assessment Component of the TEI

The work described in this handout has involved substantive contributions from Deborah Ball, Hyman Bass, Merrie Blunk, Timothy Boerst, Sara Constant, Donald Freeman, Jennifer Lewis, Pamela Moss, Annemarie Palincsar, Cathy Reischl, Laurie Sleep, and Meri Tenney-Muirhead.

In addition, the assessment component of the TEI is benefiting from interactions with the Advancing Literacies in the Disciplines Project (led by Elizabeth Moje, Bob Bain, Pat Herbst, and Deanna Birdyshaw), the Learning Mathematics for Teaching Project (directed by Heather Hill), the One-to-One Laptop Pilot (led by Deanna Birdyshaw and Charlie Peters), and the Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment Research (BEAR) Center, Directed by Mark Wilson (UC Berkeley).

Comments and Questions Appreciated!

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