Newberry College
Institutional Report

Standard 2

C. The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the performance of candidates, the unit, and its programs.

C.1. How does the unit use its assessment system to improve the performance of candidates and the unit and its programs?

While continuous revision takes place in the Teacher Education Program (TEP) unit assessment system as Newberry College moves toward creating a culture of improvement through campus-wide assessment, the system has been operating effectively since 2007. The system, as revised in 2010, including the schedule for distribution and analysis of data, is described in the Unit Assessment System document. Logistical support for the Unit Assessment System is provided through the Newberry College Academic Assessment Committee (AAC).

The strong growth of faculty expertise on candidate and program assessment has made the TEP faculty a resource for Newberry College, which is ever more focused on data-informed decision-making (particularly in relation to attainment of student and program learning outcomes). However, before implementation of our current assessment system, very little was happening in the area of program improvement based on assessment data. Our current system includes three important components related to data collection.

- Data are gathered regarding candidate performance from key assessments which are mapped across multiple courses. These assessments are reflected in appropriate course syllabi and data are collected in LiveText. Key assessments include student self-assessment and faculty assessment of the Newberry College TEP Dispositions for Teaching.

- At four transition points in the program, called Stages of Progress, data are gathered and analyzed regarding applicant qualifications, candidate proficiencies and performance (defined according to professional and state standards), and competence of graduates. Assessment instruments were chosen because they are predictive of candidate success both within the unit program and during the first years in the field (admission essay rubric, measurement of readiness to enter internship, internship evaluation rubric, UWS rubric, lesson plan rubric, and portfolio rubric).

- Data are gathered regarding unit operations and program quality from internal and external sources including clinical surveys (by interns, mentors, and clinical supervisors), student complaint and suggestion forms, post-graduate performance assessments (posted by the State Department), assessments of the TEP by candidates after their first year of employment, student course surveys, and TEP database updates.

Our current system also includes components related to data use for program improvement.

- Data are analyzed by internal and external reviewers according to an annual assessment schedule. Reviewers include Department of Education (DOE) faculty, TEP faculty through the Continuous Improvement in Teacher Education (CITE) team, the Teacher Education Committee (TEC), and the Academic Assessment Committee (AAC). Efficacy of courses, programs, and clinical experiences is evaluated and changes are initiated where indicated by the data.

- Candidate and faculty assessment data are regularly shared to help individuals reflect on their performance and improve it (faculty surveys, candidate self-assessments).

TEP faculty have made tremendous strides in developing and implementing meaningful assessments of candidate performance. In 2006, many programs used course grades and tests as assessments. With the arrival of a new department chair and new instructors, faculty continued to develop a deeper understanding of candidate assessment in relation to professional, state, and unit standards, and their assessments became much more sophisticated. Today, programs have in-depth assessments with detailed rubrics addressing candidate competence related to specific professional standards. Additionally, program assessment now includes program consideration of surveys completed by interns, graduates one year following program completion and employers of those graduates.

In addition, the TEP recognizes the importance of examining multiple and varied sources of data in order to make valid judgments related to unit and candidate performance. All efforts are made to collect useful data from both internal and external sources as well as data of all types: student learning, demographics, perceptions, and process. Most data are analyzed longitudinally and efforts are made to ensure the reliability of internal assessment instruments.

Programs use all of these data points to drive meaningful program change. Data-driven program changes can clearly be seen in Program Reports, minutes of meetings, and in other documentation. A few program specific examples are provided here:

- Early Childhood Education (ECE) completed a program revision including deleting a course deemed repetitive (math concepts) and adding a new course on working with families and the community. ECE courses have also been refined to focus more specifically on classroom management, advocacy and culturally-relevant pedagogy. The program changes are based on analysis of candidate performance data, faculty analysis of the curriculum, feedback from candidates on surveys, and on data from the Program Review Process.

- Elementary Education changed its field experience plan following an analysis showing student performance declining in one area and upon interviewing candidates, mentors teachers, and course instructors. Data analysis displayed that ELE majors were not allowed enough time teaching in the field in the semester prior to the internship. ELE also refined a number of assignments to address particular areas in which data showed that candidates needed more assistance such reflection on teaching and assessment.

- From the NASPE program review process, the physical education faculty realized that even though skill levels of candidates were in different activity classes, a need to assess them multiple times emerged in order to help them achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of fitness throughout the entire program. Faculty are collaborating to determine when and what classes will be used to assess the students. In the Fall 2010 semester, faculty utilized the Fitness Gram testing instrument to assess the fitness level of the candidates and look forward to using this instrument in subsequent semesters to assess other physical education majors.

- Music Education. The primary impetus in realigning the music education curriculum came from observation of students in field experience and internship, and feedback from alumni. Although standards were met, these assessments displayed that more experience in practical application of writing music lesson plans and in-class and laboratory teaching was desirable. The realignment enables the music education program exceed National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) requirements of professional components being- "… dealt with in a practical context…and providing opportunities for various types of observation and teaching". NASM also requires that "Studies in the area of specialization must continue throughout the published normal period of the degree program." The Department of Music now has music education courses which allow time for in-class planning and teaching experience from the freshman year until student teaching, and provides opportunities for students to practice and exceed competencies for both NASM requirements and Department of Music Education goals, which are based on the Newberry College Conceptual Framework.

- Secondary Mathematics: Curricular changes were made following analysis of candidate performance data that showed that candidates need more experience with specific technologies (e.g., graphing calculators) and background on the history of mathematics.

Additional changes include the addition of courses like EDU 300 (Assessment for Learning) and ECE 240 (Children, Families, Schools, and Communities) because of gaps in candidate knowledge identified by performance data. The TEP has also revised existing courses. For example, EDU 382 used to be entitled Educational Technology II. Through analyzing data of student learning gains, it was deemed that only one course in technology was needed and that technology should be infused in all courses. EDU 382 became Teaching and Technology and the content was changed to prepare candidates for the types of technology they will encounter in the public schools and to develop effective and appropriate use of technology in instruction.

C.2. Please respond to C.2a if this is the standard on which the unit is moving to the Target Level. If it is not the standard on which you are moving to the target level, respond to C.2b.

C.2a. Standard on which the unit is moving to the Target Level

- **Describe work undertaken to move to the Target Level.**
- **Discuss plans for continuing to improve.**

The Newberry College TEP is moving toward target in Standard 2. In part, this advancement mirrors the work of the College as a whole in its movement toward creating a culture of improvement through campus-wide assessment. The TEP has been a model for and beneficiary of the campus-wide transformation. The greatest areas of program change across the TEP programs overall have been in two areas: Clinical Experiences and Assessment. These are discussed in their respective sections of the IR (Standard 3 and here in Standard 2), but can be summarized as follows: Programs have significantly increased the number and diversity of clinical experiences and our engagement with P-12 partners; AND, since 2007, the Unit has developed and implemented a strong and systematic Unit Assessment System which has served to improve unit and candidate performance.

Assessment of the System

In a revised assessment system developed and started in 2010, the TEP Unit Assessment System is overseen at the college level by the Academic Assessment Committee (AAC), which evaluates the capacity and effectiveness of the Unit Assessment System according to assessment system rubrics. On an annual basis, the unit submits documentation and evidence of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) aligned to the Newberry College Mission and Goals, plans for assessment, sets criteria for success, collects and summarizes data, and reflects on needed changes. The TEP has designated a Program Assessment Coordinator (PAC) who works as a liaison between the AAC and TEP. The PAC has made certain to align TEP Program Learning Outcomes and associated assessments with the TEP Conceptual Framework and candidate proficiencies outlined in professional and state standards. The PAC works with an AAC coach to improve assessment capacity and effectiveness, as well as to examine the utility of intended PLOs, assessment instruments, and criteria.

While the AAC generally requires each major to assess alone, in consultation with the CITE team, AAC decided that that all ten programs under the umbrella of the TEP would approach unit assessment as a whole. Stakeholders felt this structure would give the unit added coherence and capacity for self-assessment and growth. 2010-11 TEP unit-wide Program Learning Outcomes are as follows.

After graduation, TEP candidates will be able to…

1. Demonstrate content knowledge appropriate in intended subject area(s) and grade level(s).
2. Plan effective instruction for diverse students in intended subject area(s) and grade level(s).
3. Implement instruction effectively for diverse students in intended subject area(s) and grade level(s).
4. Analyze and reflect on effects of instruction on student learning.
5. Create a well-managed, learning-focused classroom environment.
6. Exhibit dispositions outlined in the Newberry College Teacher Education Program Dispositions for Teaching.

The AAC evaluates the TEP Unit Assessment System according to a set rubric and reports its data to Academic Affairs and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) which maintains documentation of all data to be used in SACS reports and connects all individual administrative units within Newberry College.

Assessment Technology

The Newberry College TEP is dedicated to using technology, not as an end in itself, but to assist in improving the reliability of data collected and help stakeholders manipulate and analyze the data so valid judgments can be made.

After much deliberation and research, the TEP decided (beginning in 2007) to use Live Text as the primary environment for collecting, housing, and manipulating assessment data as well as generating reports. The Unit Assessment System also makes extensive use of Jenzabar, the College's student management system, to provide demographic and academic performance data. In addition, network shared space is utilized to facilitate faculty/candidate interaction and communication, as well as collaboration between faculty members. Collectively, the current TEP database contains, but is not limited to, files on the following.

- Teacher candidates' course grades, including current GPA

- Teacher candidates' basic demographic data including rank in high school class, SAT scores, ethnicity, and gender

- Teacher candidates' key assignments scored by common rubrics, PRAXIS scores, and scores on assignments aligned to SPA standards

- Teacher candidates' field placement evaluations

- Teacher candidates' internship evaluations

- Schools used for field placement and clinical experiences, including evaluations of the site and the diversity of the site

- Mentor teachers' basic demographic information, years of experience, certifications, advanced degrees, NBPTS status, and evaluations by past interns

- Professional community data (including full-time faculty) including advanced degrees, P-12 experience, areas of expertise, courses taught, scholarship, and candidate evaluations

- Part-time faculty information including advanced degrees, P-12 experience, areas of expertise, courses taught, and candidate evaluations

The key linking field is the teacher candidate student number. Data are updated continuously and audited once per semester. While used almost constantly, data is reviewed once per year by all TEP representatives (DOE, CITE, TEC, AAC).

Currently, the TEP is in discussion with Jenzabar regarding further integration into the College's course management system. The TEP is researching the ability of the new system to generate the kind of "reports on demand" needed in unit review. Those changes will serve to improve the Unit Assessment System and help the TEP better meet professional program standards.

Multiple Assessments at Multiple Points

The TEP recognizes the importance of examining multiple and varied sources of data in order to make valid judgments related to unit and candidate performance. All efforts are made to collect useful data

from both internal and external sources as well as data of all types: student learning, demographics, perceptions, and process. In addition, most data are analyzed longitudinally.

At the same time, the unit has set up four transition points called "Stages of Progress" to allow for appropriate and multiple assessments of candidates throughout the program. These Stages of Progress and corresponding gates are: 1) Emerging as a Leader (gate = admission to TEP), 2) Developing as a Teacher (gate = admission to the internship), 3) Practicing as a Teacher (gate = exit from the internship), and 4) Becoming a Professional (gate = program completion). Data is also collected in practice after completion of the TEP through post-graduate observation data posted by the State Department after graduates' second year of teaching, data derived from TEP-created assessment instruments completed by graduates' employers after their first year of teaching, and other assessments, like focus groups, conducted with principals who have hired TEP graduates.

The TEP works constantly to ensure reliable assessment of both the unit and candidate performance. Measures to maintain consistency and allow for accurate interpretation include the establishment of common rubrics for all key assessments, regular training in internship assessments, designating lead teachers and a base course structure for courses with multiple instructors, and periodic inter-rater reliability tests. Changes have been made in TEP practices consistent with the results of these efforts. For example, in January 2011 the TEP revised the rubric used to assess candidate admission to the TEP when an inter-rater reliability test revealed confusion over wording related to demonstration of knowledge of the Conceptual Framework.

Systematic Cycle of Assessment

Data are systematically collected and reviewed according to the TEP schedule for distribution and analysis of data outlined in the Unit Assessment System. The assessment cycle at Newberry College is annual, corresponding to the academic year. Almost all data included in the unit assessment system are reviewed annually by a variety of stakeholders.

One can see from the data schedule that many data from a single assessment cycle are often reviewed in August, at the start of the next assessment cycle. The assessment schedule is designed in this way to make certain that the work of each reviewing body (the DOE, TEC, and CITE) is informed at the start with relevant information, so that any decisions made are more valid and have a greater chance of success. It is important to note, however, that if a relevant and time-sensitive piece of data is revealed during the assessment cycle, it is reviewed by the appropriate bodies immediately.

Reviewing bodies make appropriate changes to their programs or procedures based on reviewed data, including changes to assessment procedures and/or instruments to ensure reliability and validity. Any proposed changes must be submitted to governing bodies as outlined in the unit's governance structure. Unit and program changes are recorded in committee minutes and reflected in the reviews of Newberry College curriculum committees.

Candidate and Faculty Self-Assessment and Planning

For every course each semester, TEP faculty are required to administer a student evaluation of the course and the faculty member. Interns and their mentor teachers also assess TEP faculty acting as College supervisors. These data are stored in the assessment system, and faculty are required to reflect in detail on the data in their annual reports. These reports require that faculty use the data to plan for performance improvement.

This kind of self-assessment and use of perceptions data models performance improvement for candidates, who are asked to self-assess and plan for improvement in planning, instruction, classroom management, professionalism, and content knowledge throughout the TEP.

Plans for Continued Improvement

The TEP Unit Assessment System is clearly aligned to professional, state, and institutional standards, and it is comprehensive, including assessment of candidates' content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and professional dispositions at multiple stages in the program. TEP unit self-assessment and review is systematic and continual. Several steps for continued improvement have been identified in TEP reviews and during the NCATE accreditation process.

1. The TEP will undertake a thorough study of the relationships between current performance assessments and candidate success later in classrooms or schools. Clear correlations need to be made, especially in regard to the relevance of the Conceptual Framework to effective practice in the classroom after candidate graduation.

2. The TEP will conduct a thorough review of key assessments and common rubrics for fairness, accuracy, and consistency across courses. This review will reinforce the unit's targeting of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) in every course.

3. Multiple and varied data are regularly and systematically collected and reviewed by internal and external stakeholders, but the TEP has yet to report the results publicly for the purpose of improving candidate performance. At the end of the 2010-11 assessment cycle, the TEP will write an Annual Report summarizing key data results. This report will be used in August at the start of the 2011-12 cycle by all reviewing bodies to inform and increase the validity of their decision-making. At the same time, however, the Annual Report will be published widely to encourage input from internal and external stakeholders not already involved in the Unit Assessment System.

4. The TEP will undertake a systematic study of program and unit changes instituted since 2007 to ensure that programs are strengthened without adverse consequences. This study is especially important given the deep and far-reaching changes currently being made to TEP clinical experiences.