

SUNY Potsdam
***Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan-Social Studies Middle/Secondary
Education MST***

Department Name: Social Studies Middle/Secondary Education MST

Date Submitted and Academic Year: October 13, Fall 2011 for AY2011-2012

Department Mission Statement:

SUNY Potsdam's School of Education and Professional Studies has developed a conceptual framework that specifies what is meant by its commitment to *A Tradition of Excellence: Preparing Creative and Reflective Educators*. All programs and courses within them, strive to develop the following teacher candidates' attributes: *Well-Educated Citizens, Reflective Practitioners, and Principled Educators*. Using these three dimensions (see attachment), our unit conceptual framework provides behavioral and dispositional indicators that inform the design of secondary social studies education courses and performance assessments.

The social studies education program of study has been designed to foster the breadth of knowledge of human affairs – and the capacities for considering reflectively the implications of human nature and diversity for social organization – possessed by the “*well-educated citizen*.” The social studies courses emphasize overtly the “*well-educated citizen*” and “*reflective practitioner*” dimensions in their curricula and assessments: when teacher candidates design lessons and curricular materials, they are required to justify (in writing) their design decisions in light of the citizenship mission of the social studies and the aim of promoting students' understanding of the content area knowledge. In the social studies field- and student teaching experiences, teacher candidates are required to reflect upon their observations and practice and to make considered judgments in light of recognized pedagogical standards and the citizenship mission of the social studies. Taken together – and bolstered by the series of “gates” and assessments that social studies teacher candidates encounter – the aim is to promote within each teacher candidate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions possessed by a “*principled educator*.”

Faculty Member Completing this Form: Dr. Robert Vadas

Update on prior years' "Application of Assessment Results:

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Intended Student Learning Outcome #1

Students will demonstrate acceptable levels of content knowledge in Social Studies.

Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)

The alignment of the CST with the NCSS thematic standards is depicted in the chart that follows.

NCSS Thematic Standards	Content Specialty Test
1.1 Culture and Cultural Diversity	Sub-area II: Geography Sub-area I: History and Constructed Response VI
1,2 Time, Continuity and Change	Sub-area I: History and Constructed Response VI
1.3 People, Places and Environments	Sub-area II: Geography
1.4 Individual Human Development and Identity	<i>Not addressed in the CST</i>
1.5 Individuals, Groups and Institutions	Sub-area IV: Civics, Citizenship and Government Sub-area I: History and Constructed Response VI
1.6 Power, Authority and Governance	Sub-area IV: Civics, Citizenship and Government
1.7 Production, Distribution, Consumption	Sub-area III: Economics
1.8 Science, Technology, Society	Sub-area II: Geography Sub-area I: History and Constructed Response VI Sub-area III: Economics
1.9 Global Connections and Interdependence	Sub-area II: Geography Sub-area I: History and Constructed Response VI
1.10 Civic Ideals and Practices	Sub-area IV: Civics, Citizenship and Government

As shown in the above chart, there is alignment between the sub-areas and NCSS standards:

- NCSS Standard 1.1 (Culture and Cultural Diversity), for example, is related to sub-area II: Geography; however, this thematic standard, is also assessed by sub-area I: History, since historical knowledge of specific regions of the world is also included.
- CST sub-area I: History addresses three geographic domains (World, United States, and New York State) and the processes and major developments that foster interconnections among them; therefore it also addresses NCSS Standard 1.9.

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Direct Assessment #2 – Course Grades

NCSS Thematic Standards	SUCP Designated Course
I Culture and Cultural Diversity	ANTC 202 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
II Time, Continuity and Change	HIST 379 History of New York State
III People, Places and Environments	GEOG 360(260) Introduction to Social Geography <u>or</u> GEOG 350 World Geography
IV Indiv. Human Development & Identity	PSYC 321 Psychology of Adolescence
V Individuals, Groups and Institutions	SOCI 101 Introduction to Sociology
VI Power, Authority and Governance	POLS 200 Political Ideas <u>or</u> POLS 110 Introduction to US Politics
VII Production, Distribution, Consumption	ECON 105 Principles of Microeconomics <u>or</u> ECON 110 Principles of Macroeconomics
VIII Science, Technology, Society	A History; Sociology; Anthropology; or Politics course that aligns with Stnd VIII
IX Global Connections	Choose one course on Africa, Asia, or Latin America/Caribbean from two of the following disciplines: Anthropology; History; Geography or Sociology Or, another Anthropology; History; Geography or Sociology course that meets Standard IX
X Civic Ideals and Practices	POLS 110 Introduction to US Politics

Direct Assessment #3 - Social Studies Content Portfolio

The “content portfolio” is intended to address all of the NCSS thematic standards, as well as pedagogical standard 3.1. Regarding the fulfillment of pedagogical standard 3.1, the “reflection paper” that accompanies each “artifact” demands that candidates identify curricular connections and illustrate appropriate pedagogical strategies for the content knowledge expressed by the “artifact.” As such, the “content portfolio” serves as an experience that draws together most of the key components expected in a quality teacher preparation in the social studies.

Data Source/Results & Analysis

Content Specialty Test: Teacher candidates must satisfactorily complete the New York State Teacher Certification Examination Social Studies Content Specialty Test (CST) to receive their initial certification, although it is not a graduation requirement. Prior to October 2003, the CST had only 5 multiple-choice content sub-areas (history, geography, economics, civics/government, and social studies skills), and no Constructed Response section. Before February 2004, candidates had five years from the granting of their Provisional Certificate to successfully pass the CST. For this reason, many of our graduates 2001-2003 have yet to complete this requirement, explaining the lack of CST scores from those years. Beginning in October, 2003, a Constructed Response (on History content) Sub-area VI was added, and since February 2004, candidates are required to pass this new examination prior to receiving their Initial certification to teach.

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The Social Studies CST reflects the content knowledge contained within the required social studies courses in middle and secondary education in New York State:

- I. History
- II. Geography
- III. Economics
- IV. Civics, Citizenship and Government
- V. Social Studies Skills
- VI. Constructed Response (History content)

Core concepts, themes, theories, and fundamental knowledge within each of these sub-areas are assessed. Three geographic domains - World, United States, and New York State – are addressed, with explicit attention to interconnections, relationships, and processes that intersect the three domains.

Direct Assessment #2: Course Grades

This key assessment is a composite of grades in the content prerequisite courses, generally taken as part of their undergraduate degree and which correspond to the content knowledge domains expressed by the NCSS thematic standards (1.1-1.10). MST students are required to have, as prerequisite courses, an array of content-specific coursework completed prior to being fully accepted into the program. A student lacking a maximum of four prerequisite courses may be accepted provisionally into the program provided the prerequisites lacking are taken concurrently or prior to the start of the candidate's program.

When possible, MST candidates are advised to take graduate level content courses or upper level undergraduate courses to fulfill their requirements. This explains the diversity of coursework in the tables below relative to the minimum introductory level requirements. The course requirements are conceptually aligned with NCSS standards allowing for a degree of variance which is reflected in the variety of course descriptions from candidate undergraduate institutions. For example, the requirement for an "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology" may be fulfilled by Introductory level courses at a minimum, although upper level courses in Anthropology (or other similar disciplines) with culture as a major theme are recommended.

Direct Assessment #3 - Social Studies Content Portfolio

This instrument is a “content portfolio” composed of “artifacts” that demonstrate content knowledge proficiency in the domains expressed by the NCSS thematic strands and corresponding “reflection papers” that demonstrate candidates’ proficiency in “translating” disciplinary concepts and questions into a form suited to secondary-level instruction. As such, the design of the “content portfolio” is intended to reinforce close connections between the nature of specific content knowledge and the demands of teaching and learning.

Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement

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Intended Student Learning Outcome #2

Students will demonstrate pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills and dispositions.

Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)

Direct Assessment #1 – Social Studies Unit Plan

This key assessment addresses, explicitly the pedagogical skills included in Standards 1.1-1.10. This thematically integrated unit requires candidates to develop assessment instruments that are based on the NCSS standards related to the integration of content and methodology; they are congruent with New York State core curricula social studies guidelines which are conceptually based and address all of the NCSS thematic standards. In the design of the components of the unit plan, candidates are at liberty to choose the topic. Aware of the NCSS thematic standards, candidates must integrate social studies major concepts (history, geography, political science, sociology and anthropology) as well as secondary disciplines, especially literature, music, art and other aspects of multi-cultural curricula relative to issues of current interest. Their doing so “captures” the NCSS focus on interdisciplinary infusion through issues-based curriculum design, as well as the long-standing emphasis in New York State on “spiraling” students’ exposure to core concepts successively through the grade levels. The design of core courses in the New York State secondary social studies curriculum is overtly inter-disciplinary.

Direct Assessment #2 - INTASC Principles Evaluation – Form 5

This form focuses on pedagogical content knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching, and as such, the ratings pertain to all 10 of the integrated thematic standards. Throughout their two student teaching placements, candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate their competencies with respect to content through the ratings for the INTASC 1 section.

Since the evaluation form is organized in accordance with the INTASC principles for beginning teachers, candidates also have the opportunity to demonstrate the pedagogical skills and dispositions implicit in each of the thematic standards.

A review of the ten INTASC standards (see table below) reveals significant similarities to the thematic understanding of NCSS standards 1.1 through 1.10. Content and pedagogical integration of the content and assessment are integral to the INTASC standards as noted below. As all candidates are exposed to integrated multidisciplinary social studies content models in the two required social studies methods courses options, As such, candidates have options to align their student teaching with all ten NCSS thematic standards. Evaluation of INTASC standard 1, "content knowledge," is directly aligned with this focus. The remaining nine INTASC standards align pragmatically with the teaching practice requirements found in the NCSS strands.

INTASC Principle
I: Content Knowledge
2: Development
3: Individual Differences
4: Instruction
5: Management
6: Language

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7: Planning
8: Assessment
9: Professionalism
10: Collaboration

Direct Assessment #3 – Culminating Experience

The Culminating Experience (CE) is designed to act as a graduate thesis or integrative assessment of the candidate's philosophy, focus of study and/or perspective of the social studies.

The CE is to be concluded at the end of the candidate's study within the MST Secondary Social Studies Education Program, although work on the CE is encouraged to begin by the second semester of the candidate's program. The CE (along with the Content Portfolio) should be one of the candidate's major components of their graduate portfolio.

Data Source/Results & Analysis

Direct Assessment #1 – Social Studies Unit Plan

This assignment requires a minimum of 15 daily lessons thematically tied into comprehensive, standards and conceptually based integrated social studies unit. This assignment is developed and completed during Fall semester in GRED 688 for MST students. GRED 688 is the methods course following GRED 681, a social studies theory course. GRED 688 is taken concurrently with GRED 689, the field based Practica course requiring a minimum of 100 hours in class experiences in the field prior to student teaching in the following Spring semester.

Direct Assessment #2 - INTASC Principles Evaluation – Form 5

SUNY Potsdam requires all candidates for Initial Certification in Adolescence Education: Social Studies 7-12, with 5-6 extension to satisfactorily complete a full semester of student teaching. This experience is divided into two placements, one at the middle/junior high school level, the other at the senior high school level. In each placement, candidates are formally evaluated two times, once at the midpoint (about week 4) for formative purposes, the other at the end of the placement for summative purposes. These evaluations use the form included in section 4.5.b below. This form is the result of several years of collaborative input from program faculty, and teachers and supervisors in the field. For the year 2006-07 a revised form 5 will be in effect. For each evaluation, the candidate, sponsor teacher, and college supervisor independently complete the form for that period. Then, meeting as a Triad, they discuss their perspectives and come up with consensus ratings for each indicator. The consensus rating is then recorded in the candidate's student teaching record.

Direct Assessment #3 – Culminating Experience

The Culminating Experience is intended to collectively address the content and pedagogical components of the ten NCSS thematic standards. This assignment, regardless of which of the three formats of CE the candidate chooses, must refer to current social studies pedagogical practice. As such, a candidate's CE is expected to connect most of the key components of a quality teacher preparation in the social studies.

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Intended Student Learning Outcome #3

Teacher candidates will demonstrate effects on student learning.

Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)

Teacher Work Sample

This assignment focuses on pedagogical content knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teaching, and as such, the ratings pertain to all 10 of the integrated thematic. Specifically, it focuses on the skills associated with assessment, planning, and instruction. Through this project, candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate the pedagogical skills and dispositions implicit in each of the NCSS thematic standards. A review of the seven INTASC principles, and their respective INTASC Standard 1-10, (see table below) reveals significant similarities to the thematic understanding of NCSS standards 1.1 through 1.10. As all candidates are exposed to integrated multidisciplinary social studies content models in the two required social studies methods courses options, candidates have options to align their student teaching with all ten NCSS thematic standards.

Teacher Work Sample Component	INTASC Standard Met	INTASC Principle
I: Contextual Factors	1,3	I: Content Knowledge 3: Individual Differences
2: Learning Goals	7	7: Planning
3: Assessment Plan	8	8: Assessment
4: Design for Instruction	3,4	4: Instruction 3: Individual Differences
5: Instructional Decision-Making	4,9	4: Instruction 9: Professionalism
6: Analysis of Student Learning	8,9	8: Assessment 9: Professionalism
7: Reflection and Self-Evaluation	9	9: Professionalism

Data Source/Results & Analysis

SUNY Potsdam requires all student teachers to complete at least one data-based teaching unit (or Teacher Work Sample) during the student teaching semester. This assessment allows the student teacher to practice and to demonstrate his/her ability to use data about student learning to inform the instructional planning and delivery process.

Application of Results/Action Plan for Improvement

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<i>Summary of Action Plans for upcoming Academic Year ___2011-2012_____</i>
1. A revised scheduling format will be presented to the secondary education department Fall 2011/Spring 2012 for implementation in Fall 2012. In conjunction with the BA program revision the MST will be altered in the following manner: Change GRED 688 (Methods course) from 3 to 2 credits and rename it "Secondary Social Studies Instruction.
2. GRED 684 (Content Portfolio) will be changed from 1 credit to 2 credits and the new title will be: "Content Portfolio and Teaching Middle School social studies Instruction."
3. These changes will not alter the content aspect of the program related to working with the Arts & Science Faculty.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

Closing the Loop:

The ten thematic NCSS standards state that "candidates in the social studies should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level" A systematic review of the data from our program assessments has provided us with critical information relative to the program's effectiveness in achieving the goals imbedded in those standards, and has resulted in the development of several strategies to further improve the program.

Two basic conclusions can be drawn from a review of the data. First, it is apparent that the program significantly addresses the NCSS thematic standards in multiple ways for the core programmatic requirements. Our seven assessments provide convincing evidence about our candidates' "knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level." No significant deficiencies in any of the seven assessments have been noted and, in fact, candidate performance indicates that most have a strong level of content knowledge and understanding and skill in current social studies methodologies,

Reasons for the above results include a thoroughness and overlap of content and methodological requirements throughout the program as well as content requirements for candidate majors in the social studies areas of content study. The second conclusion is that revisions and additions to our policies and requirements over the past five years as a result of reviewing assessment results have proven to be effective and have improved the overall quality of the program, as indicated in this report.

Content Knowledge:

Program prerequisite requirements were revised in January 2002 to meet the content knowledge demands of the NCSS thematic standards. Prior to 2002, our prerequisites included only 7 courses, primarily in the discipline of history. A content assessment of the NCSS standards suggested that a more diverse range of courses across the social studies disciplines would provide our candidate's with a firmer content foundation. Our current prerequisites are in strong alignment with the integrated NCSS standards (1.1-1.10) and have allowed us to be confident in their content knowledge across the full range of the social studies. Our current standards-aligned program of studies (see Section I) with its range of prerequisite undergraduate preparation, has proven to be invaluable as a means of insuring a broad-based content background (in Gate 1: Admission), resulting in high-quality candidates applying to and entering the program.

A review of the required Content Specialty Test (CST) during the writing of this SPA report has revealed that candidates tend to be weaker in the content area of economics. This led to a review of the program conducted concurrently with faculty from the Department of Economics and to the

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development of a new graduate level content course that can be used as an elective and/or to fulfill prerequisite economic requirements. Other ways to develop economic content knowledge in activities within our pedagogical content knowledge coursework are being discussed within the Secondary Education Department.

Significant effort has been made to increase collaboration with other social studies content area faculty in the School of Arts and Sciences to provide more graduate courses, clear advisement guidelines, and shared participation in course review (having A & S faculty, for example, review Graduate Education courses for content and liberal arts designation). As a result, SUNY Potsdam history and politics majors, for example, who enter the graduate MST program have already been guided by the MST advisement prerequisite course requirement sheet and are better prepared to begin their graduate studies as a result. As 62% of the MST candidates are SUNY graduates, this has had significant impact on the depth and breadth of content knowledge of candidates in the program.

In addition, as a result of changes in New York State requirements for "linking" content to pedagogy in graduate social studies courses, several new courses from Arts and Science Departments have either been developed or been revised to meet this need. These courses are available to MST candidates to fulfill prerequisite or elective requirements, resulting in intermixing of current teachers in the field working on their MSED degrees, participating in courses with MST candidates, and offering a wealth of experiential and logistical advisement to the program.

A direct result of this program review process has been to develop the Content Portfolio requirement for both undergrad and graduate social studies candidates. The purpose of this requirement is to effect better relationships between student teaching and candidate content knowledge, to enhance understanding of NCSS thematic requirements, and to encourage collaborative integration of candidates and content major faculty.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

NCSS standards have inspired the creation and revision of our clinical evaluation instrument (Form 5) to assess candidate field experiences at four levels (from Practicum through their two student teaching placements). The development of this form has been evolutionary and has been the major focus of a seminar/workshop held each of the past 4 years. This seminar is held each September and includes all secondary social studies candidates from the program, teachers from the field, SUNY social studies faculty and various administrators and student teaching supervisors. The consequence of this intensive collaborative effort has been improvement in Form 5, better involvement of local schools and their social studies faculty, and greater input from teachers in the field. The seminar has taken on the persona of a 'mini' conference with panel discussions, presentation and the matching of candidates with cooperating teachers from the field. Review of unit development criteria and assessment results from our program assessments has led to direct changes in the teaching of the social studies teaching methods course. These changes include greater emphasis on state requirements and aligning lesson goals with state core curricula guidelines; spending more time on developing comprehension and integration of interdisciplinary approaches (and a reduction in the perception of history as "social studies") and more emphasis on alternative resource utilization, including sources and activities with a multicultural focus.

In 2004, School of Education and Professional Studies Faculty identified dispositions for teaching as a critical problem among a small number of candidates. In 2004, we created a dispositional framework based on our conceptual framework element, the Principled Educator.

In 2005, the Secondary Education Department modified that framework to respond to secondary level concerns. A process was created for monitoring dispositions and remediating problems identified by faculty. Since Fall 2005, dispositional assessment has been a regular part of every field experience and most courses. We expect that as candidates come to expect to be held accountable for professional behavior, instances of problems will decrease even further.

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Impact on Student Learning

In response to the NCATE standard requiring an assessment of candidate impact on student learning, we instituted an additional assessment level, the Teacher Work Sample. Piloted in Fall 2005, the Teacher Work Sample was revised in Spring 2006, with all student teachers now required to complete this project in their first placement. This project situates lesson planning and delivery in an assessment context. The goal is to improve reciprocal understanding of NCSS thematic standards as a means to verify and assess student learning while candidates are engaged in their student teaching experience. It also has the additional benefit of increasing involvement with the cooperating teachers through discussions of the impact of instructional choices on student learning. At this time, the results of this assessment are tentative, although they suggest that our candidates have the skills to analyze their impact on their students' learning. It will take several semesters to determine any solid patterns.

Conclusions

Throughout this process, focus on assessment data and working collaboratively with other faculty and with our college supervisors has resulted in substantive discussions about ways to improve the operation of this program. We expect that in the years to come, this culture of assessment will allow us to even more confidently recommend our candidates to our local schools.