Department of Education

Assessment Plan

Submitted to the Program Review Committee

January 2004

Substantially revised: June 2005
Minor updates: June 2006, October 2006
Department of Education Assessment Plan

Introduction:

The Department of Education brings to the task of assessment a set of circumstances that differ in several important respects from other academic departments and programs at Westmont. We call particular attention to the following:

(1) We offer two overlapping, but bureaucratically distinct, programs. We coordinate the BA program in Liberal Studies, and also sponsor a fifth-year post-baccalaureate Teaching Credential program. Half to two-thirds of the graduates of our Liberal Studies program enter our Elementary Credential program. Given that one program feeds into the other, we conceivably could have one overall assessment plan for both. For the time being, however, we have chosen to develop (and provide here) separate plans.

(2) The Education Department chose not to participate in the Irvine-sponsored Departmental Self-Studies of several years back. Thus although we have much to build on, as noted below, we do not reference that particular document or set of procedures in the present plan.

(3) Probably more than any other academic department at the college, we have a great deal of scrutiny by, and high level of accountability to, external evaluators at the state level. In some ways this makes the present task easier, and perhaps in other ways harder. In any case, it helps to explain much of what we have done and will continue to do by way of assessment.

Part I: Teacher Preparation (Credential) Program

Building on the Past

For approximately 15 years, the department has administered a survey to first-year graduates and to the employers of first-year graduates in the field of education. This has been, and will continue to be a major building block of the department’s assessment strategy for the credential program.

Extensive portfolios compiled by student teachers have also been used to assess graduates’ achievement. These include essays explaining how the six major state professional competencies have been demonstrated in the classroom or are demonstrated in the portfolio itself.
Hoped for outcomes

(a) Professional competencies identified by the state of CA

California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing has identified thirteen teaching performance expectations (TPEs) for beginning teachers, grouped under six major domains. Granted that our teacher candidates’ ability to demonstrate these are a major condition both of their own licensure and of our program’s accreditation by the state, these performance expectations constitute a major component of our department’s identified outcomes.

A. Making subject matter comprehensible to students

TPE 1: Subject-specific pedagogical skills

B. Assessing student learning

TPE 2: Monitoring student learning during instruction
TPE 3: Interpretation and use of assessments

C. Engaging and supporting students in learning

TPE 4: Making content accessible
TPE 5: Student engagement
TPE 6: Developmentally appropriate teaching practices
TPE 7: Teaching English learners

D. Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for students

TPE 8: Learning about students
TPE 9: Instructional planning

E. Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning

TPE 10: Instructional time
TPE 11: Social environment

F. Developing as a professional educator

TPE 12: Professional, legal, and ethical obligations
TPE 13: Professional growth

(b) Professional outcomes identified by department
• **Professional habits and understanding of professional obligations.** We expect our candidates to demonstrate, for instance, habits of punctuality, initiative, communicating effectively with other professionals; as well as a commitment to on-going professional growth.

• **The ability to manage a classroom effectively.** We expect, for instance, that candidates are able to establish rapport with students, motivate them to learn, re-direct unproductive behavior, and create and maintain classroom routines.

**Assessment Strategies**

1. Compile evaluations completed on all student teachers by master teachers.

2. Administer and compile a brief survey on the program to master teachers (initiated Spring 2006)

3. Continue to administer our annual survey of first-year graduates on the effectiveness of different components of the program.

4. Continue to administer and compile our annual survey of principals employing our first-year graduates (Add an electronic option in the spring of 2007 as an attempt to boost our return rate)

5. As in the past, candidates will continue to compile a professional portfolio, aligned to the six strands of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

6. Administer selected portions of the state’s Teaching Performance Assessment (experimentation began in Spring 2003. First use of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) Record of Evidence (ROE) Form, Spring 2006, on selected responses to Task 4. Use of TPA and official ROE form will continue in Spring 2007 for Task 3 and Task 4. As of July 2008, the CTC will require at least some components of the TPA or similar approved instrument in all state-approved programs.

7. Canvas members of the Teacher Preparation Advisory Board (local principals and teachers) as to the effectiveness of our graduates and our program. An informal survey will be administered during the Fall TAB meeting (initiated Fall 2005).

8. Results of the RICA (Reading Instruction Competency Assessment will be compiled and analyzed annually.

**Use of Results**
The first department meeting after graduation will continue to be one occasion when available assessment data for the preceding year will be discussed. The first department meeting in September will be used to discuss additional data for the preceding academic year.

Results will continue to be used to shape course content/approach, field supervision, and selection of field supervisors.

**Part II: Liberal Studies Program**

**Building on the Past**

For several years, graduates of the Liberal Studies Program have had to compile an informal portfolio, including work samples from a range of academic disciplines and a set of references from professors outside the Department of Education.

A number of the Liberal Studies courses were also evaluated on the annual departmental survey sent to graduates of the Credential program. Clearly this is more a measure of inputs than outcomes, but nonetheless represents part of we’re building on.

As part of the state-approval process for the Revised Liberal Studies Program (effective for students entering Westmont 9/03), candidates compile a much more extensive portfolio. In conjunction with this portfolio, candidates take a 1-credit course, ED 109: Liberal Studies Seminar, where they reflect on and document selected outcomes of their program as a whole. This seminar was offered for the first time in the spring of 2006.

Some of the mechanisms for assessing the Liberal Studies program, then, were already coming into being before Westmont’s current Program Review process was established. A number of additional strategies are being implemented as part of ED 109: Liberal Studies Seminar.

**Hopped for outcomes and measures of assessment**

(a) **Content knowledge and skills across a range of disciplines—the knowledge and skills necessary for admission to a credential program and for effective**

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1 Since this document was written, the state approval process for Liberal Studies programs (Elementary Subject Matter Preparation) was suspended. So we are no longer accountable to the state on this point. But we are proceeding to implement, on its own merits, what we proposed to the state in 2002-03.
teaching in the elementary classroom. (For highly detailed subject matter specifications, see the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s Standards for Elementary Subject Matter Preparation, 2001.)

- Reading, Language, and Literature
- History and Social Science
- Mathematics
- Science (Life/Physical/Earth)
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Physical Education & Health
- Human Development

This is the primary and most measurable outcome of the Liberal Studies program. The following will be used to assess our graduate’s success in achieving this outcome:

- Content knowledge will be assessed by the California Subject Examination for Teachers—Multiple Subjects.

- Content knowledge will also be assessed more impressionistically through candidates’ Portfolios.

- Perceived effectiveness of in-puts (Westmont coursework) in this area will be assessed by a brief survey given to each Liberal Studies graduate during their ED 109 Seminar (Previously, this information was derived from the survey of Credential Program graduates, which included sections on both the Liberal Studies major and Credential Program)

(b) Ability to reflect insightfully on their own education

A second important, if somewhat intangible, outcome that we increasingly strive for in the Liberal Studies program is graduates’ ability to reflect insightfully on their own education—including their college course of study. Students should be able to articulate the value of each of the disciplines they have studied—not only as this relates to being able to teach each discipline to others, but as the disciplines have contributed to their own personal development and enrichment. Students should be able to articulate both the nature of and rationale for their college course of study as a whole, including the strengths and limitations of the Liberal Studies major.

- Assessment: As noted above, under Building on the Past, candidates who entered the program as of 9/03 will include in their course of study a one-credit Liberal Studies Seminar, which provides structured opportunities to reflect on students’ course of study as a whole. Seminar group as a whole will serve as a de facto focus group to gauge students’ ability to reflect insightfully on their own education.
(c) **Institutional outcomes of particular concern to the department**

I. **Christian Orientation.** We want our students to be able to articulate some understanding of what it means to be a Christian in the field of education; or alternatively, how to educate in ways that are compatible with the Christian faith.

III. **Diversity.** We want our students to be successful, in and out of the classroom, in engaging persons unlike themselves. We are particularly concerned with the self-reflection and cross-cultural communication components of this institutional standard.

V. **Written & Oral Communication.** Obviously we want our graduates to be effective models in both of these areas, particularly as they relate to prospective teachers.

- The chief opportunity for graduates of the Liberal Studies program to demonstrate in a cumulative manner the college-wide goals articulated above is through their written components of the portfolio completed for ED 109. Specifically:
  - The current draft of Section VII of the Portfolio Assignment speaks directly or indirectly to certain aspects of the Christian Orientation standard.
  - Draft of Section VI of the Portfolio Assignment gives graduates an opportunity to demonstrate the steps they have taken toward attaining the Diversity outcomes.
  - The writing involved in the Portfolio Assignment as a whole, and the oral presentation of the same, provide evidence of graduate’s attainment of writing and speaking skills.
- Senior Interviews with selected graduates are giving us, as of Spring 2004, evidence of our students’ attainment, and/or their perception of attainment of these goals.

**Assessment Strategies in review**

1. CSET exam (first offered in CA 2003-04)
2. Liberal Studies Survey (Spring 2007 and following; similar information collected on comprehensive departmental survey since at least the 1980s)
3. ED 109 Portfolio assignment and related group reflection (first offered Spring 2006)
4. Senior Interview (first administered Spring 2004)
Use of Results

At the end of each academic year, explicit attention will be given to results of each of the strategies above.

CSET results will be compiled and areas of concerns communicated to departments responsible for preparation in those areas. (During the spring of 2006, Chair e-mailed concerns and/or commendations about CSET results to two academic departments.)

Liberal Studies survey results will be discussed by Education Department members as a whole.

Instructor for ED 109: Liberal Studies Seminar will share with department members generalizations gathered from completed portfolios as a whole.

Impressions from Senior Interviews will continue to be shared, and suggestions taken for action items.

Where appropriate, Department Chair will pass on concerns and commendations to other academic departments and/or specific course instructors.