

Title: Adopting a Performance-Based Model of Teacher Education: Issues and Strategies

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### Abstract

This paper presents examples of issues, concerns, and strategies from the collective perspectives of the authors. The University of New Orleans is an urban, publicly funded institution of higher education that is the primary provider of teachers in the greater New Orleans area. Addressed in this paper are a number of key issues associated with shifting a teacher education program to a performance-based model.

## **Adopting a Performance-Based Model of Teacher Education: Issues and Strategies**

### **Introduction**

The number of new teachers available to urban school districts continues to fall short of the reported need. Haberman (2000, 1987) reported that the average career of urban educators is three to five years and that within every five-year period, one half of the urban teaching force leaves the profession. In order to attract more teachers in the profession, the majority of states have instituted some form of alternate licensure. The problem of attracting qualified teachers is especially acute in high poverty areas (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Wise, 1993). Although the number of qualified educators overall is problematic, the fact that fewer individuals representing minority groups are entering education is especially disturbing given the demographic characteristics of urban districts (Grace, 1992).

In addition to focusing on the number of prospective teachers entering teacher education programs, there is a need to redesign these programs to increase their effectiveness in meeting the needs of urban learners and schools. Tillman (1989) called for the National Association for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to examine the needs of urban school districts and to develop standards for teacher preparation based on those needs. Other urban teacher educators have identified effective strategies related to various areas of teacher education, including: field experiences (Mason, 1997), instructional skills (Brainin & Sema, 1997), and underlying principles for urban education (Gilbert, 1997).

Current national certification trends (e.g., NCATE, INTASC) and new state accountability mandates are increasingly calling for teacher education programs to adopt

new models of service delivery. This paper presents examples of issues, concerns, and strategies from the collective perspectives of the authors. The University of New Orleans is an urban, publicly funded institution of higher education that is the primary provider of teachers in the greater New Orleans area. Addressed in this paper are a number of key issues associated with shifting a teacher education program to a performance-based model. Table 1 identifies each issue associated with a redesigned teacher education program and provides a brief contrast of traditional, competency-based, and performance based models of teacher education.

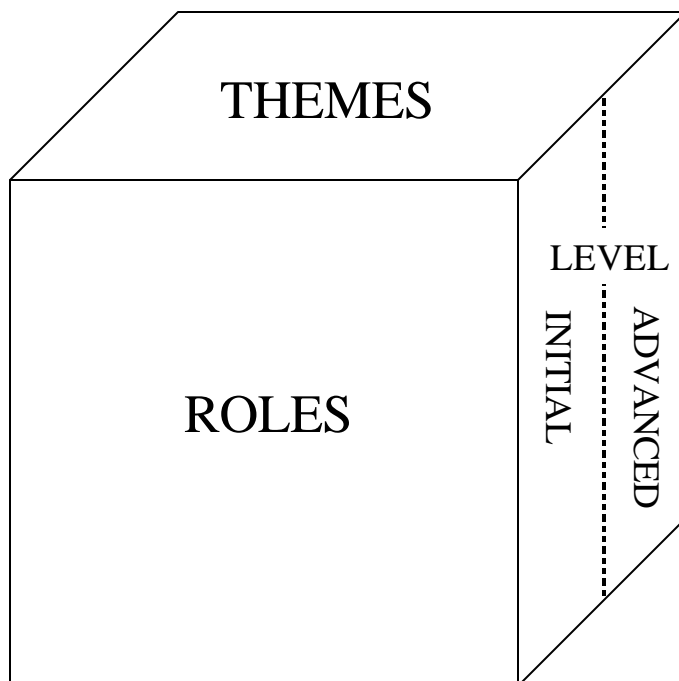
**Table 1**  
**COMPARISON OF DIFFERING MODELS OF TEACHER PREPARATION**

<b>Program Feature</b>	<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Competency-Based</b>	<b>Performance-Based</b>
<i>Program of Study</i>	Organized according to courses	Courses aligned with demonstration of specific competencies	Comprehensive program of study supports ongoing application of skills to bring about educational outcomes
<i>Course Design</i>	Individual faculty responsible for design of targeted course(s)	Courses aligned with specific competency clusters	Key skill and concept themes are addressed at multiple points in program of study within sequenced course blocks
<i>Faculty Role</i>	Courses typically taught by single faculty aligned with specific department	Faculty aligned with specific competency clusters	Faculty organized into teams to support course blocks
<i>Candidate Support</i>	Traditional advising	Candidates receive support to address specific competencies from multiple sources aligned with competency clusters.	Candidates receive ongoing consistent support throughout program of study to address targeted performance standards
<i>Field Experience</i>	Field experiences designed by individual faculty as dictated by individual courses. Major field experiences contained within student teaching as a culminating experience.	Field experiences aligned with each competency cluster.	Field experiences aligned with competency cluster in addition to field experiences which support candidate in applying multiple skill and content themes concurrently.
<i>Induction</i>	Responsibility of hiring district	University may assume responsibility to retrain teacher on specific areas of need	Partnership created with employing district to support teacher during induction period
<i>Evaluation</i>	Course grades	Individualized review of competency demonstration	Team review of candidate ability to demonstrate desired individual and program outcomes

## University of New Orleans' Program Framework

Figure 1 presents a teacher education program of study framework recently adopted by the University of New Orleans. The framework includes three critical dimensions: one relates to critical roles performed by effective educators, a second relates to key themes addressed by the program of study, and a third relates to two program levels, initial licensure and advanced study. Our framework is relatively streamlined to facilitate ease of use, yet complex enough to support program participants to address a wide variety of professional competencies. Following is a brief description of each dimension of the framework.

**Figure 1**  
**UNO Program of Study Framework**



Professional Roles. A framework should encompass each critical task associated with effective teaching. Table 2 presents the six roles included in the University of New Orleans framework. Five of the six roles reflect the components of teaching upon which

first year teachers will be evaluated in Louisiana. The sixth role, “use of inquiry to improve practice,” was determined by our faculty to be an equally important factor in teachers’ effectiveness. These roles are addressed within the program of study via both coursework and field experiences. Additionally, the participant evaluation component of the program assists teachers in documenting their professional growth in terms of each targeted role.

**Table 2**  
**Professional Roles**

<b>Professional Roles of Teachers</b>	<b>Examples of Critical Tasks for Participant Evaluation</b>
Design and Deliver Instruction	Develop lesson plans to accommodate needs of diverse learners  Align instruction with curriculum standards and benchmarks
Advocate for Services and Supports	Recognize the need for advocacy efforts  Link student and family to community resources
Manage Time, Tasks, and Environments	Organize classroom resources and logistics to maximize learning  Utilize available resources to compensate for materials that may be unavailable in urban schools
Support Group Practice Through Collaboration	Partner with other professionals to develop, implement, and evaluate instructional programs
Improve School and System Practice	Participate in school improvement efforts
Use Inquiry to Improve Practice	Identify additional sources of information to plan and evaluate instruction

Critical Themes. A framework must be comprehensive in terms of its ability to address the multiple issues associated with effective urban education. While the number of identified issues can be extensive, our program framework clustered critical issues into 11 categories (see Table 3), each of which impacts teaching and learning across levels of

certification (e.g. PK-3, or 7-12) and disciplines (e.g. science or English education).

Additional categories can be added, or existing ones modified over time.

**Table 3**  
**Program of Study Themes**

Health and Safety	Learning Theory
Literacy	Parent/Family/Community
Assessment	Technology
Context of Schooling	Legal & Ethical Issues
Behavior Support	Communication
	Diversity

Program Level. The framework should also support both initial licensure and advanced professional development. Although multiple levels could be established for each program of study depending on the pathway selected for licensure (e.g., undergraduate study, alternate certification) or advanced study (e.g., Masters degree, professional development), our framework includes two levels to facilitate ease of use.

### **Program Redesign Issues**

There are many issues related to the implementation of a performance-based model of teacher education. These issues framing the teacher education redesign at the University of New Orleans are described below.

**1. Program of study:** The program of study should adopt a framework that identifies critical performances for effective teachers to meet the needs of diverse and special needs learners with an emphasis on urban settings. The program should be spiraled; that is, successive components of the program build upon previously addressed performances culminating with the student teaching experience. Thus the program addresses multiple themes at increasing levels of sophistication rather than within a single

course format. Critical to a performance-based program are field experiences that increase in number and sophistication as the candidate moves through the program.

**2. Course design:** Course design in a performance-based program involves using multiple formats to support candidates in demonstrating targeted performances. Each course addresses targeted performances through five components: a content outline, in-class activities, field activities, authentic evaluation, and resources.

**3. Faculty roles:** Critical to the success of redesign is providing assistance to faculty in moving from traditional roles to ones that are collaborative, field-based, and program- (rather than course-) focused. Other essential faculty shifts include moving from working as individuals to working in groups, from teaching traditionally (didactic format) to interactive learning, from presenting fixed content to facilitating problem-solving, and from “owning” specific courses to supporting a program of study.

**4. Candidate supports:** A redesigned program must meet the needs of individual candidates through effective strategies for advising, supporting retention in the program, and providing accommodations needed for diverse populations and special needs learners. The program should also provide intensive support for field activities as well as assistance in integrating content and field work across roles, themes, and content areas. Another shift in program redesign is the provision of peer support in addition to faculty support.

**5. Technology:** The use of technology increases both efficiency and effectiveness of advising, program delivery, candidate learning, faculty collaboration, program evaluation, and induction. Critical performances for candidates are the use of technology for personal and instructional use and for classroom management and operation.

Technology enables faculty to ensure consistency across coursework, to support candidate portfolio development, and to provide electronic access to teaching resources (such as case studies).

**6. Field experiences:** An important component of a redesigned program is the development and support of integrated and sequenced field experiences in multiple education settings to ensure effective demonstration of targeted performances. The amount of time spent in field experiences increases as candidates progress through the program. These experiences incorporate diversity in terms of type of setting and type of students and increase in complexity from a single-role focus to a multiple-role focus. Supervision of candidates is a collaborative effort between university faculty/staff and K-12 faculty in cooperating school districts. As seen in Attachment A, the design of field experiences is based on a professional development process that can be continued after the candidates become practicing teachers. Note that the organizing framework includes a sequence of decision points to guide subsequent professional development objectives.

**7. Induction:** During the initial employment period, the university partners with school districts to assist program graduates in meeting district accountability mandates and to increase the likelihood of continued teaching in urban schools with extensive needs. This partnership represents an accountability shift from school district responsibility in supporting and retaining new teachers to a shared responsibility between the employing school district and the university. This shared approach includes emphasis on passing the new teacher licensure test, emphasis on new teacher retention through continued professional development, and the use of a cohort model to support teachers in induction.

**8. Candidate evaluation:** Authentic evaluation techniques, including the professional portfolio, are used to evaluate candidate performance throughout the program of study as well as to assist candidates in self-assessing their professional development progress and needs. Evaluation includes multiple perspectives (not just university faculty) and addresses national and state standards. A reflective practice framework helps candidates verify their engagement in the various professional roles of teachers.

**9. Program evaluation:** The evaluation component utilizes multiple techniques to determine program effectiveness, to identify areas in need of improvement, and to develop supporting policies and procedures to maintain program consistency. This evaluation process is essential to ensure that revised program features are truly linked to the teacher education process. Using both quantitative and qualitative measures, features of the evaluation must include perspectives of the parties whom the teacher must ultimately satisfy, namely, administrators, peer teachers, and parents.

### **Beyond the Issues**

Our efforts thus far have led us through the beginning stages of redesigning our teacher preparation program in ways that we hope will make it more responsive to the needs of the urban school districts that look to us as a major source of highly qualified new teachers. The work has not always been easy or without setbacks as everyone adjusts to new roles and expectations. Despite some struggles, however, the experience has been largely positive. Many faculty have come to recognize and value the strength derived from working across departmental boundaries to develop a cohesive program of study that blends in critical content as defined from the perspectives of special education,

curriculum and instruction, and educational leadership, counseling, and foundations faculty members. There is a new level of ownership of teacher preparation beyond the individual course or department level, with many faculty members for the first time identifying a comfortable role for themselves in the program.

Of course, the work is not nearly finished. While the framework has led us thus far to the outlines of a workable new program, all of its components must be fleshed out as the new courses begin to be offered. Further, we must now expand our redesign efforts from initial teacher preparation to include reformulation of advanced programs of study. The same framework will be used to ensure continuity in programs from initial through advanced certifications and ongoing professional development. We envision a seamless process of teacher development that is responsive to the evolving needs of the urban constituencies we serve.

## References

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**Attachment A, following page**



### Why Is This Important?

IDEA 1997 Amendments require that all students with disabilities have access to, and make progress in, the general education curriculum.

This has implications for assessment and IEP program planning. The IEP must address the following:

- Present levels of performance, including how the disability affects involvement and progress in general curriculum
- Measurable goals and objectives that enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum while at the same time meeting their unique educational needs
- A description of supplementary aids and services, modifications or supports needed for the child to attain annual goals, be involved and progress in the general curriculum, participate in extracurricular & nonacademic activities
- An explanation of the extent to which the child will **not participate** with children without disabilities in general education classes and activities
- Any modifications needed to participate in state or district assessment and if the typical assessment is not appropriate how the child's achievement will be measured (Alternate Assessment)

In Louisiana students with severe disabilities will most likely participate in the LEAP Alternate Assessment which assesses student progress on a subset of the general education standards (English/Language Arts, Math, Science, & Social Studies) One of your first steps in establishing priorities for instruction is to consider the general education curriculum.



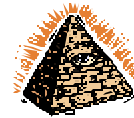
### What Steps Should I Take?

**Planning:** Select a student that is in need of increasing their access to the general education curriculum or that maybe you are struggling to ensure access to the general education curriculum. Review the General Education Access Guide – Section IV for students who will participate in Alternate Assessment.

**Implementation:** Complete a student planning matrix for each general education content area – English/Language Arts, Math, Science, & Social Studies.

**Evaluation/Reflection:** How did the assessment go? What were the difficult areas? What were the results? How will you incorporate the results into instruction?

### What Artifacts Should I Have When I'm Done?



- Copies of General Education Planning Matrices for each content area
- Reflection on the process

### What Outcomes Do You Expect?



- Teachers will know the general education curriculum and how it applies to students with severe disabilities.
- Teachers will incorporate general education curriculum into students' educational programming.

### What Timelines are Associated with This Field Activity?



This is a **required** Initial Level Field Activity, therefore must be completed before your Initial Portfolio Review. It is also a required field activity for EDSP 4010. This activity should take 1 week to complete. **It is due November 4, 2002 (Fall, 2002 semester).**

### Where Can I Go for More Information?



Ryndak, D.L., & Alper, S., (1996). Curriculum content for students with moderate and severe disabilities in inclusive settings.

Nolet, V., & McLaughlin, M.J., (2000). Accessing the General Curriculum: Including Students with disabilities in standards-based reform.

La. Department of Education, General Education Access Guide, Section IV.

<http://www.doe.state.la.us>

(There is a box at the top of the home page: Most Requested Information – hit that button and scroll to the General Education Access Guide)