Drills, saws, and undeterminable noises. With Gentry building construction work starting the day after graduation in May, there is much to complete in the next few weeks. The same can be said for assessment. In addition to being involved with AAPA, NCTATE and CAPTE, and CAA over the next few months and into next year, what can we look forward to in the field of assessment this year?

You might be pleased to know that our Spotlight on Assessment strategic initiative will continue to foster our assessment culture. But, there will be some minor adjustments for improvement.

First, we will continue fostering assessment culture by having faculty and other stakeholder participation in our assessment system. The Neag Assessment Committee will continue to represent all departments and teacher education, and will have faculty, students, and administrators on this committee.

What was accomplished by this committee in 2008-2009? The following objectives were attained.

- Provided final edits, shared and communicated with faculty on our 2nd edition of the Neag School of Education Assessment Plan.
- Provided feedback on the employer survey report, which was then published to all respective groups.
- Discussed and determined plans for our next school-wide alumni survey.
- Provided feedback to the faculty/staff climate survey and worked on the final report, which is now on the intranet.
- Provided feedback to finalize the Neag School Profile Report.
- Ensured that each department developed NEASC Assessment Plans in the fall and reported findings.

Dr. Thomas Defranco is most appreciative of the individuals serving on this committee. The members for 2009-2010 were: Jill Adelson, Mike Alfano, Manju Banerjee, Laura Burton, Mallory Coleman, Craig Denegar, Randy Ewart, Michele Femc-Bagwell, Jean Gubbins, Morgan Hills, Marijke Kehrhnahn, Cory Maley, Stephanie Mazerolle, David Moss, Linda Neelly, Erin Quann, Yuhang Rong, Matthew Ross, Larissa Schroeder, Jason Stephens, Shuana Tucker, Jeff Volek, Megan Welsh, Wei Xia, and Mary Yakimowski. Please refer to a separate article on page 3 about the specific accomplishments of this committee.
Anticipation and Accomplishments

Continued from page 1

The TNE Teacher Education Committee also worked diligently this past year on two major undertakings. A major accomplishment of this committee was to reassess the items on the entry, exit, and alumni surveys and rework them for the next four years. Another accomplishment was the Educational Expansions study, a project that now has 73,000 data records to examine the achievement of students from grades 3-8 taught by Neag graduates in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. On page 4 we have an article with more details on the Educational Expansions project.

The 2008-2009 members who represented Neag and CLAS faculty, the district and state education agencies, students, and community members of the TNE Teacher Education Assessment Committee were: Michael Alfano, Christine Brown, Scott Brown, James Dixon, Kathryn Edison, Sarah Ellsworth, Michael Faggella-Luby, Burcu Kaniskan, Jeffrey Kramer, Alvin Larson, Xing Liu, Joseph Madaus, Rachelle Pérusse, Peter Prowda, Amanda Richmond, Jane Rogers, Lisa Sanetti, Rohini Sen, Jason Stephens, Hariharan Swaminathan, Natalia Tabakin, Jaci VanHeest, Manuela Wagner, Wei Xia, and Mary Yakimowski.

For the 2009-2010 school year, this committee will be a subcommittee of the Neag Assessment Committee. Other groups will look more closely at OATS, incorporating Checkbox for our Internet survey and form capabilities, using assessment by employing technology, and aligning standards and syllabi.

The second major initiative for Spotlight on Assessment is our colloquia. This past year we were most fortunate to have the following presenters to share valuable information: Barbara Beaudin (CSDE), Sandra Chafouleas (Neag School Psychology), Janet Clinton-Hattie (Australia), Michael Coyne (Neag Special Education), Arthur Eisenkraft (UMass), Michael Faggella-Luby (Neag Special Education), John Hattie (Australia), Janet Jordan (UIT), Samantha Kennedy (Achievement First), Katie Moirs (CSDE), George Noell (Louisiana), Natalie Olinghouse (Neag Special Education), Thanos Patelis (College Board), Lisa Sanetti (Neag School Psychology), Brandi Simonsen (Neag Special Education), George Sugai (Neag Special Education), and Hariharan Swaminathan (Neag Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment).

This series of 13 Spotlight on Assessment Colloquia was organized, facilitated, and evaluated for 542 participants, who represented faculty, staff, students, district, school, and state attendees. Positive evaluation ratings were received, with each rated 1.5 or lower on a 1-4 scale! How will we make these even better? How will these continue to be held during construction? Creativity is the answer.

We will now be expanding this session to be called Spotlight on Assessment, Evaluation and Research Colloquia. The sites selected will be outside of the Gentry building in the fall but will return to Gentry in the spring.

The third initiative yielded the production of six Spotlight on Assessment News Brief newsletters for faculty and the Neag community. These News Briefs included Point of View features, assessment colloquia initiative, learning modules, and other related items that focused on the Neag-assessment culture.

Appreciation is extended to the following for writing a Point of View during the past year: Michael Alfano, Manju Banerjee, Melissa Bray, Scott Brown, Sandra Chafouleas, Craig Denegar, Mary Anne Doyle, Elizabeth Howard, Marijke Kehrhan, Carl Maresh, Betsy McCoach, David Moss, H. Jane Rogers, Sally Reis, Richard L. Schwab, Barry Sheckley, and Megan Welsh. Additional thanks is given to our graduate students who wrote the articles: Mallory Coleman, Lukas Kailimang, Reyhan ‘Burcu’ Kaniskan, Scott McCarthy, Madeline Sedovic, Wei Xia, Qing Li, and Katherine Picho.

This year, each issue of News Brief will be tied to a specific theme. For example, this issue is devoted to a full understanding of U.S. News & World Report ratings of graduate schools of education. If you have a vision on what another theme might be, please do not hesitate to share it with me.

Continued on page 3
Anticipation /Accomplishments

Continued from page 2

The fourth and fifth initiatives were focused on various avenues of communicating, the Internet and the bulletin board. We also initiated a webpage for Neag School with news, colloquia, conferences, reports, and links at: http://www.education.uconn.edu/assessment/. Because of construction, we are going to hold back on the bulletin board.

As the construction will make Neag School of Education even better, we are hoping that the small changes to the Neag assessment system will do the same.

Neag Stays in Upper 25 in 2010 U.S. World Report

Janice Palmer
Director of Communications

The Neag School of Education is the #1 public school of education in the Northeast and on the East Coast. Also significant are the ranking of the Neag School’s core programs which are individually assessed by U.S. News. Four rank in the top tier, including: Elementary Education (14), Special Education (17), Curriculum & Instruction (22), and Education Administration (26).

Former Dean Richard Schwab says he is gratified that the rankings remain strong. “They reinforce other indicators we use to gauge the quality of our programs,” he says.

The Neag School continues to attract many of the state’s top students to its programs, according to Schwab. “We’re also pleased by feedback from superintendents who often tell us Neag graduates are their first choice for hire.”

Schwab also points to research indicating Neag teacher education grads stay in the field of education far longer than the state or national average. “These factors combined paint a very encouraging picture,” he says, “that we’re headed in the right direction and our grads are well-prepared professionals who are leaders in classrooms, in schools, and in the field of education.”

Each year, U.S. News gathers opinion data from program directors, senior faculty, school superintendents, and deans to rank professional school programs. Statistical indicators supplied by each school are used to measure the quality of a school’s faculty, research, and students.

Neag Assessment Committee Report

Providing final edits and communicating with faculty on our Neag School of Education Assessment Plan

Committee members were provided with the final version of the Neag School of Education Assessment Plan draft and had the opportunity to review it for final modifications. After

Continued on next page
these modifications were made, copies of the plan were widely distributed to committee members, department and program leaders, and the dean’s office. In addition, copies were sent to departments upon request. Also, a PowerPoint presentation, which captured the highlights of the plan, was created and distributed to committee members. Committee members who were also faculty members were asked to share it with their departments. Finally, the Program Report (which was distributed and collected in the fall) and the School Improvement Report (which the committee was shown during the October meeting), were mentioned in the plan and introduced to the school faculty.

In the spring, Mike Alfano, Michele Femc Bagwell, and Mary Yakimowski presented the new plan at the New England Assessment Conference. Many wanted copies to model our plan.

Providing feedback on the employer survey report

In the fall semester, the draft of the employer survey report was shared electronically and in-person at our October meeting. Feedback was given by the committee to the draft of the employer survey report, and this was incorporated into the final version. The final version was widely distributed to those involved in teacher education, physical training, school counseling, school psychology, and administrator/superintendent preparation programs.

At the October meeting, the committee also pointed out that the school psychology, athletic training, and physical training programs would like to customize the employer survey, as each program is undergoing accreditation.

In the spring, a tailored survey was created for the school psychology program, athletic training program, and physical therapy department. This survey was administered and the results obtained were shared.

Discussing and determining plans for our next alumni survey

At our October meeting, the issue of when to resurvey those graduates across each of our departments was discussed. The survey was last distributed in the spring of 2006 and the results were reported in the fall of 2007. The committee determined that we will re-administer the survey in 2011.

Alumni surveys were developed for the school psychology program, athletic training program, and physical therapy department, and subsequently administered, with the results shared.

Providing feedback to the faculty and staff climate survey and report

The committee members, via email, provided feedback on multiple drafts of the climate survey during the fall. The survey was distributed to the faculty and staff and reminders were sent out to them to complete the survey. The preliminary results were shared and discussed with the committee at the October meeting, and the results were also shared with the dean’s office. The associate dean announced two recommendations tied to the results during the November faculty meeting that we will address through committee: the mentoring program and communication.

Continued on page 10
How U.S. News & World Report Calculate School Ranks

Austin Johnson  
School Psychology Program

Every year, U.S. News & World Report conducts a national survey of undergraduate and graduate programs in order to assist countless university-bound students in choosing the best school for them. U.S. News utilizes quantitative data such as average SAT and GRE scores as well as rankings from peer program surveys to generate a list of what programs they consider to be the best in America. For a detailed account of how graduate Education programs are ranked, please refer to our article on page 6, “Education Methodology”.

For the U.S. News & World Report rankings, surveys were returned by about 11,000 higher education professionals. Respondents rated programs on a Likert-type scale from “Marginal (1)” to “Outstanding (5).”

After data collection is complete, scores across surveys are standardized around each quality indicator’s mean. These scores are aggregated and then weighted based upon U.S. News’ determination of each quality area’s importance to the overall ranking.

Quality indicators for education include: “Quality assessment,” which consists of peer survey results, “Student selectivity,” which is chiefly based on mean GRE scores and acceptance rates, “Faculty resources,” which incorporates student-faculty ratios as well as the number of faculty awards and editorships, and “Research Activity,” which is based exclusively on research expenditures by program and faculty member.

Each program is ranked according to its score’s relationship to that of the highest ranked school, which is assigned a score of 100. The scores of all schools below the top-ranked school are transformed to reflect a percentage of the top score of 100.

Often, schools will share rankings if their scores are tied. When this occurs, subsequent schools are ranked according to how many schools, rather than ranks, come before them. For example, if School A and B are tied for sixth place, then the next-lowest-ranked school, School C, will be ranked eighth rather than seventh.

Specialty rankings are somewhat unique, in that they are generated exclusively through the nominations of deans from other programs. Programs are then ordinally listed based on number of votes received.

While U.S News’ rankings contain valuable information regarding key aspects of programs, the organization emphasizes that this information reflects very specific attributes of schools. Generating a holistic view of a university requires much more information than an individual school’s ranking.

The following methodology was applied to U.S. News and World Reports rankings from Fall 2007 and Spring 2008. 278 schools were sent surveys. 245 responded to survey requests, and 242 provided enough data for inclusion into the U.S. News rankings.

Quality assessment (weighted by .40)

Peer Assessment Score (.25)
- Education school deans surveyed
- Programs rated on Likert-type scale from “marginal” (1) to “outstanding” (5)
- Responses of “Don’t know” were not incorporated into score

Superintendent Assessment Score (.15)
- School district superintendants from across the nation surveyed
- Programs rated on Likert-type scale from “marginal” (1) to “outstanding” (5)
- Responses of “Don’t know” were not incorporated into score

Student Selectivity (weighted by .18)

Mean GRE Verbal Scores (.06)
- Mean GRE Verbal scores for 2007-08 school year were collected for doctoral students
- If doctoral student mean was unavailable, mean from all students was used

Mean GRE Quantitative Scores (.06)
- Mean GRE Quantitative scores for 2007-08 school year were collected for doctoral students
- If doctoral student mean was unavailable, mean from all students was used

Acceptance Rate (.06)
- Percentage of all applicants to doctoral program who were accepted to program for 2007-08 school year

Faculty Resources (weighted by .12)

Student-Faculty Ratio (.045)
- Ratio of doctoral students to faculty

Percent of Faculty With Awards (.025)
- Percentage of “full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty that held awards or editorships among selected education journals in 2006 and 2007”

Doctoral Degrees Granted (.05)
- Ratio of doctoral degrees awarded to number of full-time faculty for 2007

Research Activity (weighted by .30)

Total Research Expenditures (.15)
- Average total research expenditures per fiscal year for FY 2006 and 2007
- “Expenditures refer to separately funded research, public and private, conducted by the school”

Average Expenditures Per Faculty Member (.15)
- Average total research expenditures per full-time tenures or tenure-track faculty member per fiscal year for FY 2006 and 2007
- “Expenditures refer to separately funded research, public and private, conducted by the school”

Overall Rank: “Data were standardized about their means, and standardized scores were weighted, totaled, and rescaled so that the top school received 100; other schools received their percentage of the top score.”

Specialty Rankings: “Specialty ratings are based solely on nominations by education-school deans and education school deans of graduate studies from the list of schools surveyed. They selected up to 10 top programs in each area. Those with the most votes are listed.”


All items are summarized from this source.
Educational Expansions Project

The Neag School is continuing with the Educational Expansions project. The purpose of this project is to study the achievement patterns of Pre K-12 pupils instructed by graduates from our teacher preparation program. It is designed to provide evidence on the value of teacher preparation in promoting pupil learning and relates to all tenants of the Teachers for a New Era (TNE) initiative, funded by the Carnegie Corporation with additional funding from the Annenberg and Ford Foundations.

Research questions addressed by Educational Expansions Project (EEP) are important for the TNE, teacher education programs, and local and state policy makers. We are investigating the degree of significant differences on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in reading, mathematics and writing between pupils in the classrooms instructed by Neag prepared teachers and those in classrooms instructed by non-Neag prepared teachers.

We will focus on the impact of pupil characteristics. For example, results are disaggregated by gender, grade, subject area, program (e.g., special education), length of time in a particular school, growth over time, pupil aspirations, self-efficacy, perspectives on the learning environment, daily average attendance, and suspension rates. We will also focus on teacher characteristics. For example, teacher factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, preparation program completed, content preparation, teacher performance, number of

Annual NEASC Program in OATS & Supplemental Assessment Reports

Scott McCarthy
School Psychology Program

Being accredited as an educational institution is important for a number of reasons. It facilitates the process of winning State and Federal funding for the University, it ensures future employers that its students have gone through rigorous and thorough training, and it ensures that research grants and funds are available to the institution. The University is accredited by NEASC, the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc., whose mission is the establishment and maintenance of high levels of education, from pre-kindergarten through the higher education doctoral level.

The University and the Neag School are hard at work ensuring that this accreditation runs smoothly. This fall, the missions, goals, methods, data, and results of the findings were due from each program. This information is organized in a program called the OATS database, which systematizes the information for future use. Last year, the Neag School of Education was the only school to report its graduate and undergraduate programs into OATS. As we continue to develop a culture of assessment in the Neag School of Education, initiatives such as this one provide opportunities to make improvements to our current structure. If you’re interested in seeing how to use OATS, contact Dr. Mary Yakimowski (mary.yakimowski@uconn.edu).

Tied to the Neag School of Education Assessment Plan, there are a couple of supplemental items that we collect for other accreditations. This includes the meeting dates when assessment topics are discussed, summaries of the admissions, mid-program, program completion, and/or program alumni assessments, and what are the resulting changes based upon assessment. This short form is also due in the summer.

UCONN’s assessment site: www.assessment.uconn.edu/primer.htm
The Neag School assessment site: www.education.uconn.edu/assessment/
Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

These principles were developed under the auspices of the AAHE Assessment Forum with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education with additional support for publication and dissemination from the Exxon Education Foundation. Copies may be made without restriction. The authors are Alexander W. Astin, Trudy W. Banta, K. Patricia Cross, Elaine El-Khawas, Peter T. Ewell, Pat Hutchings, Theodore J. Marchese, Kay M. McClenny, Marcia Mentkowski, Margaret A. Miller, E. Thomas Moran, and Barbara D. Wright.

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values. Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only what we choose to assess but also how we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what’s easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time. Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students’ educational experience.

3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations—these derived from the institution’s mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students’ own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.

4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students “end up” matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way—about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, “one-shot” assessment can be better than none, improvement over time is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.

6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved. Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment’s questions can’t be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about; questions that can’t be fully addressed without. Assessment. It recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence...
that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return “results.” It is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change. Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution’s planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and is avidly sought.

9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public. There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation—to ourselves, our students, and society—is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

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**Neag Assessment Committee**

Continued from page 3

**Providing feedback to the Neag Profile Report**

The committee received a draft of the report in the fall. In this presentation, members were informed that within the report by school and by department, we will have enrollment and graduation patterns, faculty numbers and scholarship, grade distributions, and NEASC Assessment Plan information. There will be a wealth of information in the multiple appendices. The report tends to focus on three year trends. There are some guiding questions too.

In the spring semester, the report was completed and shared with the Neag Assessment Committee and program and department leaders.

**Ensuring that each department has developed NEASC Assessment Plans in the fall and report findings in the spring**

In October, we were the only school submitting NEASC assessment plans for every program and at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Department leaders received two notices with the timeline for 2008-2009.

This year, our focus was to involve even more people, to limit the number of metrics devoted to class grades, and ensure timeliness of the reporting. An email was sent to department and program leaders. Recommendations were sent in April, and plans were discussed further at the May 5 meeting.
The 12th Colloquium of the Spring 2009

It's Not Just What We Know, But How We Know and Why We Believe It

Madeline Sedovic
School Psychology Program

On April 2nd, Dr. Arthur Eisenkraft, a professor of science education at UMass Boston and the director of the Center Of Science and Math In Context (COSMIC) presented a colloquium entitled “It’s Not Just What We Know, But How We Know and Why We Believe It.” During the presentation, Dr. Eisenkraft described the essential questions of science and contrasted them with the questions often found on both teacher-generated and high-stakes assessments. He concluded by discussing the implications for curriculum.

The objectives of Dr. Eisenkraft’s session included helping participants to: listen more intently to student remarks, use the “Waldo phenomenon,” be able to recognize differences in both inter- and intra-rater reliabilities, be able to differentiate between “school questions” and “real questions,” and be able to view assessments through the assessment triangle. Dr. Eisenkraft presented four questions that are important to ask and be aware of in assessment: who is being tested, what is the purpose (e.g. to help students learn, to monitor programs, to inform teaching), is one instrument being used for all (i.e. students, teachers, and schools) and is one instrument being used for all purposes? Dr. Eisenkraft also highlighted three problems with current assessment practices, which are discussed below.

To address the issues which were presented, Dr. Eisenkraft discussed three conclusions and the related implications for teaching and assessment. His first conclusion was that students do not want to give a “wrong” answer, and teachers ask questions because they want to know what students think and why they think that way, not just because they want to test the

Continued on next page

The 13th Colloquium

Value Added Assessment: The Connecticut Story for Creating the Scale and its Uses/Misuses to Understand the Fourth Generation of the Connecticut Mastery

Wei Xia
Evaluation Measurement and Assessment Program

Dr. Hariharan Swaminathan, professor and department head of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut, provided an overview of Connecticut’s development of a vertical scale and its appropriate uses.

Dr. Swaminathan first introduced the testing context of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). He explained that the content of the Reading and Mathematics test differs across grades and the standards establishing the performance levels were developed independently for each grade, and therefore, reporting the increase on current scale and reporting the increase in the percentage of students scoring at or above the “goal” level would be inappropriate. To meet NCLB requirements, the vertical scale for Reading and Mathematics in CMT-4, the newest generation of the Connecticut Mastery Test administered to students from Grade 3 through 8 since 2006, was then created to provide the Connecticut public with a tool to measure student growth or progress over time.

Dr. Swaminathan then talked about the merits of a vertical scale. According to his presentation, the new vertical scale ranges from 200 to 700, and each point on the scale represents a level of student understanding, independent of the grade the student is in. The vertical scale allows schools to measure student progress across a body of content knowledge ranging from Grade 3 to Grade 8 for Reading and Mathematics. For the purpose of accountability, the vertical scale can provide an additional indicator of school performance and for measuring the effectiveness of new curriculum or professional

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It's Not Just What We Know

Continued from previous page

students. Three problematic issues that can arise during testing however, are that the test may not correlate with understanding, what is being tested is not what is being taught, and what is being taught is not being tested. The next conclusion presented, which goes hand-in-hand with the first conclusion, is that assessment is difficult. To resolve the problems presented and the difficulty of assessment in general, Dr. Eisenkraft emphasized the importance of testing what is valuable and listening to student responses. He went on to discuss and support the use of the assessment triangle, an approach which revolves around the idea that cognition, observation, and interpretation must be explicitly connected and designed as a coordinated whole in order to draw meaningful inferences from the assessment. For instance, when one is assessing knowledge, it's important to understand how the student is connecting the pieces of knowledge to one another in order to help a student improve these connections and expand his or her knowledge. Dr. Eisenkraft suggests posting four questions in the room for students to be aware of and thinking about in order to help further. For more information, please email Dr. Eisenkraft at arthur.eisenkraft@umb.edu and visit his website at www.comsmi.umb.edu.

Educational Expansions

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years in Neag-instructed classroom, longevity, retention, teacher ability, and classroom environment.

Variables from participating districts will include dependent variables from grades 3-8 pupil performance on the new 4th generation Connecticut Mastery Test in reading, mathematics, and writing scores from 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 from Neag graduates and all others teachers. Sample independent variables collected will include gender, race/ethnicity, special education, and English language program status. Depending on district interest, variables might also include physical fitness results, in-house developed criterion-referenced test results, Degrees of Reading Power test results, course patterns, and other variables.

Concurrently, the university/state partnership will begin establishing a data warehouse so that, in three years, this type of information will be electronically accessible; hence these efforts will lead to continued knowledge of the impact of the teacher preparation program on pupil achievement.
This year a follow-up study to the 2003-2007 TNE Alumni survey study was conducted. The continued purpose of conducting these studies is to gather information from alumni of the Neag Teacher Preparation Programs in order to improve the programs and enhance pupil achievement. Alumni graduating from the Neag Teacher Preparation Programs (both IB/M and TCPCG) between 2004 and 2008 were contacted via mail and email to participate in this online study, with the responding sample consisting of 63 alumni, 42 from the IB/M program, 13 from TCPCG, and 8 from other areas of education.

The survey consisted of questions about background information, alumni perceptions of themselves, and alumni satisfaction with various aspects of their teacher education program. Overall, the majority of alumni were Caucasian (85.7%), female (80.9%), with English as their primary language (92.1%). Most of the alumni (90.5%) had not obtained any further degrees, however nearly half (49.2%) were planning, or in the process of, furthering their education.

The majority of alumni were generally satisfied with their training programs at UConn, with 91.8% of alumni indicating that they would choose UConn again. There were also generally high satisfaction ratings for the program components of understanding people from other racial and/or ethnic backgrounds and the degree of preparation for working in the teaching profession. Most of the alumni (95.1%) continued to be involved in education, with the largest percentage endorsing the following reasons as their explanations: they enjoy working with students (88.9%) and they find it rewarding when their students learn (87.3%).

Overall, alumni from the Neag School of Education’s teacher training programs were very satisfied with the program, and when asked to grade the program, more than half (58.7%) awarded the program an “A,” followed by 27% who gave the program a grade of “B.”

Alumni were asked to rate to what degree they demonstrated various teacher dispositions. The two highest rated dispositions were the desire to make the learning process enjoyable and the belief that all students can learn. Some of the standards that alumni of various departments believed to be most important were: demonstrating knowledge of, and uses for, an extensive range of literature (for alumni in English education), knowing and demonstrating respect for their students first as unique human beings (for alumni in special education), and knowing, understanding, and applying the process of mathematical problem solving (for alumni in mathematics education).