Registration is underway for the March 19th conference on No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Positives, Obstacles, and Solutions. This will be the first annual statewide conference co-sponsored by the Neag School of Education, Teachers for a New Era, and the Connecticut Testing Network.

The NCLB has drawn presenters from both national and state levels. Plenary presenters include: Dr. Zollie Stevenson of the U.S. Department of Education, Mr. Gene Wilhoit of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and Dr. Mark K. McQuillan of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Additional presenters from the U.S. Department of Education, the CSDE, the CCSSO, and others from Connecticut will also join us.

Dr. Stevenson is the Director of the Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. His presentation: “Studies of Title I Program and State and Local Implementation of NCLB: What We Know of its Impact” will focus on U.S. Department of Education funded studies that analyze the impact of the NCLB on Title I program implementation and accountability, including results of research studies on school choice, supplemental educational services and teacher quality.

Mr. Wilhoit, the Executive Director of CCSSO, will present: “What Are the Positives, Obstacles, and Solutions from Across the States?” which will examine the NCLB from a wider scope. Additionally, Dr. McQuillan, the Commissioner of the CSDE, will give his presentation entitled: “What’s Connecticut’s Role in Implementing NCLB Successfully? “ which will focus on how to effectively execute NCLB in Connecticut.

For more information on the NCLB conference, or to register, please visit the conference website at: www.education.uconn.edu/conferences/assessment/index.cfm.

Upcoming Neag Conference Highly Anticipated

Upcoming presenters include: Dr. Thanos Patelis from the College Board, Dr. Julie Coiro from the University of Rhode Island, Dr. Jeff Greig from the Connecticut State Department of Education, as well as Dr. Scott Brown with Mr. Anthony Artino from the Neag School of Education.

For more information on upcoming presentations including descriptions, or to register, please visit the colloquia website at: www.education.uconn.edu/events/soa/index.cfm.

Spring Assessment Colloquia Series
By Kara McKenna

The spring colloquia series on assessment is in full swing. As part of the Spotlight on Assessment initiative, the Neag School of Education is sponsoring a series of presentations with topics covering many different areas of assessment.

The spring series was kicked off in January with a presentation by Dr. Gail Tomala of the Connecticut State Department of Education. Her presentation: “The BEST Teaching Portfolio: Is it Really a Professional Development Experience for Beginning Teachers and for the Educators Who Score Them?” covered the pros and cons of requiring the development of a portfolio for licensure as well as modifications being considered for the portfolio requirement. Additionally, Drs. Michael Alfano and Marijke Kehrhahn presented: “The Electronic Portfolio at the Neag School of Education: Implications for Teacher Candidate Assessment” which discussed exemplary e-portfolios from the Integrated Bachelors/Masters (IBM) and Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates (TCPG) teacher preparation programs.

Upcoming presenters include: Dr. Thanos Patelis from the College Board, Dr. Julie Coiro from the University of Rhode Island, Dr. Jeff Greig from the Connecticut State Department of Education, as well as Dr. Scott Brown with Mr. Anthony Artino from the Neag School of Education.

For more information on upcoming presentations including descriptions, or to register, please visit the colloquia website at: www.education.uconn.edu/events/soa/index.cfm.
Weighing Cows Won’t Make ‘em Fatter

By Vanessa Every

Presenter: Michael Coyne, Ph.D.

This seminar in our series on assessment colloquia presented information on how assessment can inform instructional decision-making in beginning reading stages. Four purposes of assessment were discussed including: screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and outcome. It was stressed that each purpose should be present in an effective and comprehensive reading program.

**Oral reading fluency** was highlighted as one form of assessment that could be used to inform decision-making. In oral reading fluency, a student is given one minute to read a grade-level text aloud. The number of correct words read aloud produces the student’s individual score. This assessment method may appear too simple upon first glance; however, research has indicated that there is a high correlation between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. If a child can read many words in a short period of time, it is more likely that the child has time for comprehension because less time is spent trying to figure out what the word is.

Good benchmark goals have been set that illustrate what the ‘average’ student score should be at various grades. These benchmarks aid in the decision making process for individual students, classrooms, and entire grades.

Screening is one process teachers use in the school to assess a child’s risk for reading difficulty and need for additional interventions and/or support. Screening should be administered to all children and is helpful in determining and ‘fixing’ academic problems early on.

In contrast to screening assessment, diagnostic assessments are given only to students recognized as needing interventions for reading. This type of assessment would provide a more in-depth report on student skills and instructional needs.

The third purpose is **progress monitoring**. This is where all students are monitored three times a year to determine if goals are being made, if interventions working, and if general teacher instruction working.

Finally, **outcome assessment** is administered to children two times a year, once in the fall, and once in the spring. These assessments provide information on whether or not a particular reading program was effective. Such an assessment must meet high standards for reliability and validity, as an assessment with low reliability and/or validity would be useless in measuring effectiveness of the program.

Overall, when assessment is used appropriately and effectively to inform instructional decisions and improve student achievement, it produces favorable outcomes. Individuals, classrooms, grade levels, and entire schools can benefit from effective and comprehensive assessment programs.

Electronic Portfolio at the Neag School: Implications for Assessment

By Mallory Coleman

Presenters: Michael Alfano, Ph.D.
Marijke Kehrhahn, Ph.D.

This colloquia session was held February 8, 2008. This session presented exemplar e-portfolios from the Integrated Bachelor’s/Master’s (IB/M) and Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates (TCPCG) teacher preparation programs.

The speakers explained certain artifacts that meet accreditation standards were chosen for inclusion within the respective e-portfolios. The speakers also illustrated how formative and summative assessment of teacher candidate performance could be conducted using the e-portfolio environment.
Physical Therapy (PT) Education programs are accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). CAPTE began accrediting programs in 1987. The PT at the University of Connecticut, the first in a public university, has maintained an accredited status since the inception of CAPTE. The program at the University of Connecticut was last accredited for a 10 year period in 2002. The next cycle of self-study and on-site evaluation will occur in 2010 and 2011.

The accreditation is comprehensive. CAPTE criteria for assessment occurs at a number of levels that include, but are not limited to, graduation rates and attrition, passing rate on the PT licensure examination, data gathered from students and clinical instructors during the program, and information gathered from graduates and the employers of graduates. Specific information regarding the evaluation criteria is found in the 2006 Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists.

Substantial changes continue to occur in the physical therapy profession including a vision of autonomous practice for physical therapists. These changes have also resulted in significant revisions of the education criteria. This vision of autonomous practice has also raised the bar of physical

Partnership with CLAS this Spring

The Teachers for a New Era project at the University of Connecticut, together with the Neag School of Education and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, seeks to promote the development of excellent teachers committed to enhancing the quality of PreK-12 education in the state, the region, and the nation. We are studying how many individuals in other fields can contribute to the training of future teachers as part of this initiative.

In 2006-2007, the Department of History administered 151 surveys to their sophomore and junior students. A total of 61% expressed an interest in becoming elementary or secondary school teachers: 33% reported that they were “possibly” interested in PreK-12 teaching careers and 28% reported that they were “definitely” interested.

In 2007-2008, the discussion on teacher interest was expanded to the Departments of Biology, English, World Language, Mathematics, Human Development & Family Relations, and Political Science. Each department will survey students this spring.
The purpose of this summary is to provide the student evaluation results of a central activity in the Integrated Bachelor’s/Master’s (IB/M) program of the Neag teacher preparation program, the clinical experience working in school classrooms with children in collaboration with skilled certified teachers.

The participants in the clinical experience for 2006-2007 were 268 students comprising 90 students in clinics, 97 in student teaching, and 91 in internship.

Over the course of the IB/M program, students completed six semesters, the equivalent of an average of 1,200 hours, in the PreK-12 schools. As soon as they enter the program in their junior year, students begin the first of three semesters in a clinical experience. In the spring of their senior year they complete a semester of student teaching. In their master’s year they have a full year of clinical internship. These experiences become increasingly complex and demanding as students make their way through the program. Placements are designed to help students gain practical experiences to assist them in their analysis and reflection on their teaching and learning. Concepts taught through university coursework “come to life” through participation in real-life clinical experiences with teachers and learners in schools.

Evaluative questions were posed on key areas identified by Neag teacher training program. The junior year clinic evaluation was a 21-item Likert scale that used a “1-5” scale with “5” indicating the highest rating. The master’s-year internship evaluation was similar but had a “1-7” scale with “7” indicating the highest rating. The master’s internship evaluation also contained “Yes/No” questions asking whether the intern demonstrated competent performance on the component of leadership.

The student teaching evaluation was somewhat different. The evaluation consisted of eight categories that were identical across all students. However, the ninth category differed depending on the placement and subject area of the student. All IB/M students were also given a grade (“A-F”) by their cooperating teacher.

For the procedures, every IB/M student was evaluated on one’s performance at the end of each semester by the student’s cooperating teacher. Analyses were calculated on all of the Likert scale items and the “grade.”

We found the following:
⇒ A total of 95.7% of the students received a grade of “A” by the cooperating teacher. The highest was for those in the internship (98.9%). There appears to be an improvement in the 2006-2007 results in terms of overall grades.
⇒ Students in the clinic placements had impressive ratings in acting responsibly in the clinical placement, understanding individual needs of the students, and awareness of pedagogical practices within the classroom. The highest statement with a score of 4.87 was “teacher candidate is making transition from student to professional demonstrated by appropriate dress, manner, and rapport; the lowest with a 4.52 rating was teacher candidate has participated in and/or implemented instruction based on diagnostic procedures.”
⇒ Students in clinical placements had the most positively rated area in observation skills (4.87) and the lowest was “teacher confidence” (4.66).
⇒ Student teaching placement results on a “1-4” scale ranged from 3.74 (instructional planning) to 3.87 (subject matter knowledge, professional responsibilities). Disaggregated results by content area ranged from 3.64 (student-teacher interaction-music) to 4.00 (knowledge of subject matter, instructional planning, management of classroom environment and assessment of students-

mathematics). Little variation among areas existed.
⇒ The master’s internship summary results indicate that students rated very highly in demonstrating their ability to communicate effectively, their commitment to promoting change in educational settings, responsibility and professionalism and an understanding of inquiry in professional settings (4.71 to 4.83).
⇒ These evaluative results, while positive, generally do not show areas for growth. This will be further pursued through focus group of students and PreK-12 teachers in the spring of 2008.

“...life is not a multiple choice test, it’s an open-book essay exam.”

Alan Blinder