

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM REPORT

Welcome to the NCTE SPA report for English secondary certification at Keene State College. This is a program that the English Department is proud of and fully supports in a variety of ways. We look forward to explaining our program to you and to receiving any advice you will offer to help us improve the way we create the next generation of English/Language Arts teachers. Thank you for volunteering your time to be a reviewer.

A full explanation of the English Secondary Education Program requirements is included in **Section I Context Attachment document A**.

1. State and Institutional Policies

There are no state or institutional policies that influence NCTE standards.

2. Field Experience

Secondary English students complete four education courses before Methods. Two of these have service learning components.

ESEC 150: Development, Exceptionality, and Learning I

Students complete a service learning project involving a minimum of 15-20 hours in the field. Students must reflect on and write about their experience.

ESEC 250: Development, Exceptionality, and Learning II

Students complete a service learning project in the schools involving a minimum 10-20 hours.

ESEC 385 Methods and ESEC 386 Methods Field Experience:

During their senior year, students take a field experience course in conjunction with Methods. The Methods field experience means that each student is placed with a cooperating teacher in a middle or high school. These placements are made based on the student's preference in terms of grade level and specific subject area interest. Students are required to be in the schools for a minimum of 25 hours (although most do considerably more than that), complete four formal observations, and teach four lessons (see **Context Attachment B: Methods Fieldwork Assignment**).

This field experience is their first real test in terms of their professionalism. While the Methods instructor finds the placement, it is then up to the student to contact the cooperating teacher and arrange to complete the fieldwork. How they handle this responsibility is a good indication of where students are in their disposition development. How quickly they contact the teacher and begin their work, how quickly they set up a time to be observed, and whether they spend their time sitting in the back of class or step into tutoring and aide roles immediately demonstrate their initiative, enthusiasm, and commitment.

ESEC 460 Student Teaching: All students complete a full semester (15 weeks) of student teaching at a middle or high school. Students are required to be in the school for

the full school day and to stay after school whenever necessary for preparation, working with students, attending events, or meeting parents. Students are allowed to request a placement, although they are limited to a 60-mile radius from Keene. The requirements and expectations for this experience are explained in our *Student Teaching Handbook* (see **Context Attachment C**). Students are expected to work their way into the cooperating teacher's load gradually. They generally take on their first course within a week of arriving and keep that course until they leave. They then add other courses to their load until they are teaching full-time; this full load lasts for a minimum of three weeks.

Students are evaluated based on the criteria outlined in Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. The college supervisor visits the student teacher four times during the course of the semester. During these visits, she has a conversation with both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher about the progress of the student and the success of the placement. The cooperating teachers do a formal midterm and final evaluation based on Danielson and write a letter of recommendation for the candidate. The college supervisor has been doing this work for 15 years and has cultivated a network of reliable and experienced cooperating teachers in the surrounding area on whom she calls each year for this work; a number of these teachers are her own former students.

Ensuring Quality and Consistency

One aspect of our program that helps to ensure quality mentoring and supervision is that student teachers are supervised both in Methods and student teaching by the same professor who is a tenured full professor in the English Department. Students are, therefore, mentored for a full year by this professor who also serves as their academic advisor from the time they first declare their interest in Secondary English certification until they graduate. The presence of this instructor in the English Department also means that English faculty members are apprised of changes and developments in Education courses, that the needs of secondary students are brought into any curricular discussions about the major, and that English faculty participate in gathering materials for accreditation. They see themselves as part of the enterprise of creating secondary teachers and are fully supportive of the English Education instructor, being flexible in terms of her load so that the changing needs of the program are met.

The English Education faculty member is also a member of the Secondary Education Committee, a group of faculty from other secondary certification areas. This group meets bi-weekly to coordinate curriculum, determine policies, and to share ideas.

3. Admission, Retention, Exit Criteria

Stage One: All Secondary English Education students must be admitted to the program after completing ESEC 100 Introduction to Teaching; ESEC 150 Development, Exceptionality, and Learning I; and ESEC 250 Development, Exceptionality, and Learning II and before taking ESEC 320 Educational Environments and Practices. To be admitted, students must

- 1) fill out an application for admission,
- 2) submit one reference,
- 3) have a 2.5 grade point average overall, within Education (with no grade lower than a C in 100, 150, or 250), and within English,
- 4) pass PRAXIS I, and
- 5) complete 36 credits.

A post-baccalaureate student entering the traditional initial certification program is evaluated by the English Secondary Education faculty member (**see Context Attachment A: Post Baccalaureate Requirements**). The student's transcripts are compared to the state requirements, English deficiencies are determined, and the student is provided with a list of required courses to take for English. The student then completes these plus the education courses required for certification.

Stage Two: Once students are admitted, they may take ESEC 320 Educational Environments and Practices and ESEC 385-86 Methods and Field Experience. Before being allowed to student teach, students' records are checked again to make sure they have the required 2.5 grade point average in Education (with no grade lower than a C), in English, and overall.

Stage Three: Students must complete an application for student teaching which includes

- 1) an application form,
- 2) a personal and professional identity statement,
- 3) a transcript,
- 4) a program planning sheet, and
- 5) a resume.

ESEC 460 Student Teaching is pass/fail. Whether the student passes is determined by the college supervisor and cooperating teacher, based on the criteria outlined in Charlotte Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Student teachers must also pass **ESEC 450 Seminar: Educational Principles**. Requirements for this seminar are:

- 1) attendance at and participation in the three all-day, on-campus seminars,
- 2) a final teaching portfolio presentation,
- 3) participation in a mock interview session,
- 4) six emails reflecting on the Danielson framework, and
- 5) the completion of an Assessment of Student Learning Project

After completing Student Teaching and the required work for the Seminar, students are eligible to apply for New Hampshire State Certification.

4. Conceptual Framework

Unit Goals

Our unit's conceptual framework is based on four goals. First, we strive to create teachers who are not provincial. Most of our students are from small, mostly white, New

England communities. Their experience with different perspectives and diverse populations is limited. We strive to help them develop a broader view of the world and the educational system and to help them think beyond their own personal experience by seeing the world from **multiple perspectives**.

Second, we strive to create teachers who can be dynamic change agents within the schools. This means we want them to see themselves as life-long learners who are continually engaged in the process of self-assessment and improvement and who base reform on the ever-changing needs of their students. We want to create teachers who use creative methods, thoughtful planning, and authentic assessment to engage students in their learning process. We want our future teachers to understand that learning occurs at the intersection of subject matter, student, and teacher when the teacher understands **the dynamic nature of the teaching and learning process**.

Third, our profession has been rocked by many scandals in terms of personal and professional behavior. We strive to produce teachers who understand the **professional and ethical behaviors** they need to develop to serve as role models for their colleagues and students, as well as within their communities. Those of us who train these future teachers must also, of course, be held to these same high standards.

Fourth, we have a commitment to public education as an opportunity open to everyone. However, we want our students to realize that the quality of that opportunity varies from school to school. We want students to be aware of the inequities inherent in the system and to envision themselves as advocates for change and improvement. We also want them to see how enormous these inequities become when examined from a global perspective. We would like our students to be aware that their approach to teaching and the way in which they interact with their students, their colleagues, and the larger community can contribute to creating a more **just and equitable world**.

Program Goals in Relation to Conceptual Framework:

The English Department is particularly committed to Goal #1 **Multiple Perspectives** and Goal #4 for creating a more **just and equitable world**. In 1997, the English Department revised its major so that all students were required to complete two American and two British courses for their major. However, all students were also required to complete two courses in literature outside of these two traditional categories. We offer courses in Black American, American Indian, Holocaust, Continental, and World literature, as well as the feminist focused Women Writers course. These courses are invaluable in laying the groundwork for helping our students understand educational issues from a global perspective.

The multicultural and equity parts of the conceptual framework are both reinforced in English Methods. The very first unit of Methods is focused on short stories; students read Hispanic writer Sandra Cisneros, feminist Kate Chopin, African American Langston Hughes, and Native American Leslie Marmon Silko. Based on which of the multicultural courses students have taken to fulfill their requirement, they are asked to develop

prereading activities that will help students find their way into these stories. They become “resident experts” as they explain these techniques to the rest of the class. In addition, issues of justice and equity are addressed in the two weeks of Methods focused on diversity issues, particularly gender, race, and sexual identity. Students are asked to do serious reflection on their own biases and to create ways in which they will address issues of inequality and injustice in their own classrooms and schools.

Of course, the entire Methods course is devoted to having students understand the dynamic nature of teaching and learning. To ensure this understanding, students must:

- Read *Making the Journey* by Leila Christenbury, an excellent introduction to the profession published by NCTE, and complete 11 reflective responses on the topics she covers including reading, discussions, adolescent literature, poetry, assessment, writing, grammar, and classroom management.
- Write 5 lesson plans and create one unit plan demonstrating principles of good teaching.
- Prepare and teach a 45-minute lesson, which the student and the class reflect on and critique.
- Complete their 25 hours of fieldwork including a log of their hours, 4 formal observations, 4 lessons and critiques of those lessons, and a reflection on this experience.
- Complete a Methods portfolio containing all their work for the course and a reflective essay about their professional development.

Finally, in terms of professional issues, besides the daily spontaneous discussions that occur in response to their questions, their introduction to NCTE through Christenbury, and the free copies of *Voices from the Middle* and the *English Journal* they receive, the final unit of the course is focused on this topic. These issues are addressed in various ways: reading responses to the chapters in Christenbury; reading *Nothing But the Truth* by Avi (an adolescent novel about a student who manages to get an excellent veteran English teacher fired); analyzing whatever the latest controversial teacher story is in the local paper; and analyzing the pop song “Don’t Stand So Close to Me” by the Police. These issues are, frankly, a little scary and disconcerting, but by this time in the semester, students are able to have a lively and practical discussion about how these situations could be handled. It helps them to envision themselves as professionals and problem-solvers.

5. Unit and Program Assessments

The English Education Program is fortunate in that the entire department is supportive and engaged in the program, recognizing that this program represents one-quarter of our majors. A portion of our fall and spring retreats is devoted to updates on PRAXIS scores, accreditation, and how program requirements will affect degree completion for certification students. PRAXIS scores are part of our program assessment data. We are also currently collecting assessment data about students’ reading and writing ability in the required ENG 200 Literary Analysis course, which serves as an introduction to the major.

While the data collected in 2005-06 is still being analyzed and, therefore, cannot be included in this report, our plan is to use the data to improve our reading and writing instruction and to track its impact on PRAXIS essay scores.

In addition, the English Education Program uses the same Danielson-based rubric as the unit does for its Methods and Student Teaching fieldwork assessments and for the final portfolio assessment for student teaching.

Candidates in this Report

The candidates being reported on in these assessment instruments were students in ESEC 385 Methods and 386 Field Experience in Fall 2005 and student teachers in Spring 2006 who were also part of the undergraduate education program. There were 15 students in Methods and 10 students in student teaching. All 10 successfully completed student teaching, although not all 10 elected to seek jobs in the profession after graduating.

For Assessment #2 concerning grades in the content area, only 8 of these students' records were used because 2 had not yet finished their coursework.