

Holiday 2006

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*Wishing you
and all you
hold dear,
Happy and
Safe
Holidays*

*Thank you
for your
service to
the NCATE
process at
NAU*

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Northern Arizona University NCATE Update

Vision Statement

We develop educational leaders who create tomorrow's opportunities.

TaskStream Pilot: Implementation of Course Level DRF

The Educational Technology Program faculty has been in the process of mapping professional association standards to curricula, revising courses, and identifying, revising and developing summative assignments for student and program assessment purposes. As part of this project, I developed and piloted a new course this semester that addresses a number of professional association standards. At the time of writing this article, the students in the course have completed one of the program signature assignments. The assignment asked students to develop a comprehensive Unit Plan using the TaskStream Unit and Lesson Builder tools. These plans needed to incorporate a number of the standards such as methods and strategies for teaching concepts and skills that support integration of technology productivity tools; research tools; hypermedia development; and strategies that support the needs of diverse learners.

One ongoing issue with collecting data for program level assessment has been finding the time and people willing to do a second reading and scoring of papers or projects. By creating key assignments that are directly aligned to standards, with one rubric I was able to provide my students with a detailed list of expectations,

feedback related to those expectations, and a grade based on the quality of their work related to the criteria.

Additionally, using the data from this rubric, reports can be quickly generated for my own use for improving the assignment and course as well as reports for program and unit level assessment purposes. Usually with an aggregate look at student grades for an assignment, it is difficult to determine specific strengths or weak areas in student learning. In TaskStream an aggregate report by standard can be generated through the use of the directed response folio and rubric tool. With TaskStream SPECIFIC strengths and weak areas of student work are illustrated.

In summary, although this Unit Plan assignment was a large project:

- using a rubric allowed me to quickly and consistently evaluate each student's work
- rubrics scores were not challenged
- most (12 out of 15) of my students were successful in their use of TaskStream; of the three who were not, only one had an actual problem with TaskStream that was easily resolved

Submitted by Cynthia Conn, Ph.D.
Educational Technology Program

APPEL IS HERE FOR YOU

APPEL stands for Assessment Preparation for Professional Educators Lab, whose mission is to serve as a resource for teacher candidates and alumni to learn ways to maximize their performance on the Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessment™. APPEL staff review study guides and registration materials with future teachers and assist them with practice test questions.

APPEL offers seminars throughout the year to assist with preparation for the certification exams. These seminars are held on the NAU Flagstaff campus and are often televised for remote locations. Seminars include discussion of test-taking strategies and a practice test. Staff members recommend test day expectations and methods to deal with test anxiety.

Further support is available in an online course. APPEL's web site contains information about the test objectives and study guides for various subtests. All services are available at no cost to current NAU students and NAU alumni.

For more information visit the APPEL web site at: <http://www.coe.nau.edu/appel>

What do you know about TaskStream?

Do you know how students access their program portfolios in TaskStream? Do you know what a Direct Response Folio is? How do your students sign-up for TaskStream? What assignment are students required to submit for evaluation in your class?

If the answers to these questions elude you, or if you're unsure about any aspect of TaskStream at Northern Arizona University, check out the new "Getting Started" resources on NAU's Portfolio Project web site. The Faculty Resources area of NAU's Portfolio Project web site contains three exciting new resources that are a must-see for faculty who are new to TaskStream:

First, the "Faculty TaskStream" overview handout provides a brief overview and introduction to how TaskStream is used in programs and courses at Northern Arizona University. From "What do I tell my students about TaskStream", to requesting a free faculty TaskStream subscription, the Faculty TaskStream Overview addresses several topics that are crucial for understanding how TaskStream is used at NAU.

The second resource is an interactive online TaskStream workshop for NAU faculty. This Flash-based workshop contains narrated screen simulations of the activities NAU instructors will be engaged in as they utilize TaskStream with their students.

Finally, instructors are encouraged to take the online TaskStream quiz which not only tests your knowledge of TaskStream usage at NAU, but also provides immediate feedback for incorrect responses. Upon successfully completing the quiz, you will have the option of entering your name and email address so that you're added to our list of "certified" TaskStream instructors at NAU.

Don't hesitate! Go to <http://portfolio.coe.nau.edu> today and click on "Faculty Resources" in the left-hand menu.

What's New?

ACI: You can find the Elluminate version of the third NCATE workshop that covered building rubrics in TaskStream in the ACI portal (<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~cee-p/aci/index.php>). This can be found in the "General Assessment Resources" section. Also listed under the third workshop category are links to related resources such as a sample signature assignment and rubric, a sample standards-aligned TaskStream rubric, and a TaskStream rubric wizard help guide.

Transition Points: The Student Teaching and Admissions Committees have been working hard to define Transition Point 1, 2, and 3 criteria. Transition Point 1 requirements have been approved by the faculty, and Transition Point 3 requirements are scheduled to be presented before the holiday break.

A Continuous Improvement Process

Are you aware how preparing for NCATE accreditation connects with other assessment work required by the State and University? Seeking NCATE accreditation might be seen by some as a short term project. There are a number of tasks listed on the timeline such as mapping the program's curriculum to discipline standards, developing a comprehensive assessment plan, implementing the assessment plan, writing and submitting a report detailing the results of the assessment efforts, and participating in the Spring 2009 NCATE Board of Examiners (BOE) visit that to some, might seem to be an end in and of itself.

Seeking accreditation (from NCATE, NCA, or other accrediting organizations), however, is really a long term project. Accrediting agencies are interested in seeing that related committees, assessment plans, and data collection are an integrated and sustainable part of the program, unit, and institution. This implies that the completion of the list of accreditation tasks is not an end in and of itself, but is rather integral to the functioning of programs.

The work completed for NCATE (i.e., development of an assessment plan, data collection, data analysis, and any resulting curricular changes) is actually connected to regular assessment activity already in place within the University. The processes and documentation used for accreditation purposes are the same that the University requires to be submitted to the Office of Academic Assessment (OAA) annually for NCA accreditation purposes. This information is also required to be included in program's Seven Year Review report for the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR). Additionally, these processes and documentation are exactly what the Arizona Department of Education (ADOE) requires for their review of programs to extend their ability to grant institutional recommendations. In fact, those programs that were further along in preparing for NCATE at the October site review received ADOE program approval for longer periods of time than did programs that were in the earlier stages of the process. When all is said and done, the hard work that is being performed now will result in having processes in place that will result in much less work when preparation for these other reports and reviews will be done.

Assessment, and thus accreditation, is intended to be a continuous improvement process. Given this, faculty are encouraged to develop a manageable assessment plan. There will be time to expand upon it later, if areas are found where more data or different data is needed. Focus on meeting the requirements with the least number of assessments possible, with this first application.