Preparing Competent and Caring Teachers for Leadership and Service

Teacher Performance Assessment
A Handbook for Cooperating Teachers

2010-2011
Introduction

The Illinois College Education Department requires all teacher candidates to pass a teacher performance assessment before credentials will be awarded. The Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) was piloted in the spring of 2009 with Block candidates. Then for the 2009-2010 academic year, the Education Department implemented the PACT as a student teaching requirement for credentialing teacher candidates.

In the spring of 2010, Illinois College was chosen as one of three Illinois institutions offering teacher education programs to pilot the new national Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) developed by the national Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium (TPAC), which is based on PACT. Illinois State University and the University of Illinois at Chicago were also selected to participate in the national TPA pilot. During the 2010-2011 academic year, the Illinois College Teacher Education Program will be transitioning from PACT to TPA.

This handbook provides PACT/TPA information for student teachers, supervisors, and cooperating teachers, as well as district and school site personnel.

Why is it important that the Illinois College Education programs successfully implement PACT/TPAC/TPA?

The mission of the Teacher Preparation Program at Illinois College is to prepare teachers who are both caring and competent with the potential to become highly effective twenty-first century educators dedicated to leadership and service throughout their professional careers. Further, as the web page of the Illinois College website http://www.ic.edu/academics reports “Academics are the heart of a college education. Academic courses teach the skills students take with them to jobs and graduate programs. As part of a liberal arts education, these courses also prepare students to think. The ability to identify and solve problems is a hallmark of liberal arts graduates, prized by employers everywhere.” (2010)

In order to fulfill the mission of the Illinois College Teacher Preparation Program and the liberal arts education afforded our teacher candidates, we believe that the preparation of our teacher candidates requires more than the passing scores on the assessments of content knowledge and professional teaching competence as measured by the written exams required by the Illinois Certification Testing System. While these written assessments provide quantitative evidence of a candidate’s competency, we, like other members of the PACT Consortium, feel that “highly qualified” teacher candidates should possess further competencies. (Notre Dame De Namur University, PACT: Performance Assessment for California Teachers Information Sheet for School Partners of the NDNU School of Education and Leadership. 2008, p. 1.) To determine those competencies, we have adopted and implemented a reliable and valid performance assessment, PACT/TPA, which yields both valuable quantitative and qualitative evidence to support a recommendation of a candidate’s readiness to teach for student learning.
The PACT/TPA allows us to assess other competencies that we strongly believe caring and competent educators should possess—competencies such as: 1) knowledge of the contextual factors that may impact instruction; 2) capability in the designing of instruction and assessments based on contextual knowledge and specific learner needs; 3) proficiency in lesson/segment planning grounded in theory and research; 4) using reflection, data analysis, and interpretation to inform future practice; the ability to reflect on daily instruction and on an entire learning segment or unit; 6) proficiency in justifying decisions that impact student learning and advise ongoing practice-identifying problems and solving them; 7) effective classroom management; and 8) a degree of competency with the differentiation of instruction for all students, particularly English language learners, learners from different cultural and/or socioeconomic backgrounds, and learners with special needs. Additionally, the PACT/TPA generally reflects those dispositions expected of a caring and competent professional educator dedicated to fairness and to providing access to learning for all students.

In addition, the quantitative and qualitative “feedback data” generated by PACT/TPA scoring will allow the Education Department faculty to embrace a continuous program improvement model. Inquiry, program improvement, and focused problem solving will drive the data analysis. Such inquiry provides a learning opportunity for the education faculty in terms of identifying “what our students really know based on what we think we’re teaching them” (Cap Peck and Morva MacDonald, “Using PACT for Focused Improvement of Teacher Education Programs” Power Point Presentation, PACT Implementation Conference, 2009) and utilizing that information for program improvement by engaging in focused problem solving.

What Is a Teacher Performance Assessment (PACT/TPA)?

Illinois College is a member of a California consortium of teacher preparation programs at 30 public and private/independent colleges and universities, and the University of Washington. Initially, California institutions united to develop and implement a teacher performance assessment which teacher candidates were required to successfully complete to earn a California Preliminary Single Subject or Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. By the time Illinois College joined the PACT Consortium, the teacher performance assessment, PACT, was one of two Teacher Performance Assessments being used throughout the State of California to meet the requirements for credentialing. The Illinois College Education Department has aligned the California performance assessment, PACT, with the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. Multiple Subject and Single Subject Teaching Events and the related rubrics are publicly available online at (www.pacttpa.org).
The Teacher Performance Assessment System incorporates both *Embedded Signature Assessments* (ESAs), completed through coursework, and a culminating event, referred to as the *Teaching Event.* (See chart.) A portfolio-based, subject-specific assessment of teaching performance, the *Teaching Event,* is completed by student teachers to verify their readiness for certification and for an assignment as a full time classroom teacher in the State of Illinois.

The Teaching Event focuses on K-12 student learning throughout all tasks comprising the assessment. In these assessment tasks, the teacher candidate is required to examine and think about their teaching through the lens of student learning. As candidates complete the Teaching Event, they must provide evidence of the strategies they use to make the subject matter accessible to all learners and of how they support all students in learning that content. As a teacher candidate completes the tasks in the performance assessment, he/she must examine and explain the thinking that underlies their instructional decisions and evaluate the techniques used to link the learners to the learning. Focusing on learning for all students, including those with identified special learning needs or those identified as Talented and Gifted and those with socioeconomically, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the performance assessment requires the teacher candidate to analyze and interpret the effectiveness of his/her instructional design and its implementation on student learning. The candidate, then, utilizes the results of this analysis to identify the “next steps” he/she would take in the learning process for the whole group, for subgroups, and for individuals in the class.

**The Learning Segment:**

The teacher candidate begins by selecting a *learning segment,* a part of a larger unit or segment of instruction. Comprised of a set of lessons that build on each other towards a central focus that reflect key concepts and skills, a *learning segment* has a clear
beginning and end. The selected *learning segment* should be defined by the learning targets, the instruction that is focused on those targets, and by how long it takes to meet these outcomes, not by time in terms of number of days, hours, or minutes. The *learning segment* should be a closely connected, fairly brief piece of instruction that the teacher candidate documents.

It is recommended by designers of the PACT/TPA that the *learning segment* have specific foci and that the teaching and learning tasks are “vital” and “central” to each discipline. To clarify, the teacher candidate may not select just anything when choosing a learning segment. Further, trying out something new during the Teaching Event is not advised.

**Note:** “When selecting a learning segment for this Capstone Teaching Event, candidates should identify a concept to teach, not a standard. About two months prior to their implementation of the Teaching Event, candidates should discuss with their cooperating teachers which learning segment will be needed. The learning segment should then be discussed with supervisors to ensure the candidate will be able to teach the lessons in the time required for PACT.” (PACT Central, 2008).

**The Teaching Event:**


“...when the student has primary responsibility for classroom instruction for at least the learning segment being documented. The teaching event is made up of five tasks: Context for Learning, Planning Instruction & Assessment, Instructing Students & Supporting Learning, Assessing Student Learning, and Reflecting on Teaching & Learning. Each task is designed to capture different aspects of a learning segment. In constructing the Teaching Event, candidates create lesson plans, teach and videotape their instruction, collect and analyze a whole class assessment, and reflect on the learning segment. Completing the teaching event allows candidates to assess and modify their instruction to enhance their teaching practices.”

In this assessment, you will describe, analyze, and evaluate the teaching of a 3-5 lesson unit of science instruction that will be referred to as a “learning segment”. The assessment is built around the proposition that successful teaching is based on knowledge of subject matter and subject-specific pedagogy, developing knowledge of one’s students, reflecting and acting on evidence of the effects of instruction on student learning, and considering research/theory about how students learn.

The TPAC assessment is clearly focused on student learning. To complete the assessment, the teacher candidate will describe his/her plans and what he/she actually did to achieve student learning (the “what”), provide a rationale for his/her plans and an analysis of the effects of his/her teaching on his/her students’ learning (the “so what”),
and analyze and reflect on the resulting student learning to plan next steps in instruction or improvements in the candidate's teaching practice (the “now what”).

The Four Tasks Comprising the Teaching Event:

Task 1: Planning Instruction & Assessment

Context for Learning Information
In the Context for Learning Information, an artifact for the Planning and Instruction Task, the candidate provides a brief overview of important features of the classroom context that influence instructional decisions during the learning segment. It provides evidence of: 1) candidates’ knowledge of their students through a description of variance in instructional levels and across the class; and 2) candidates’ ability to identify and summarize important factors related to their students’ learning and the school environment that will directly impact their teaching of the learning segment.

The Planning Instruction and Assessment task describes and explains candidates’ plans for the learning segment. It demonstrates their ability to organize curriculum, instruction, and assessment to help all of their students meet the standards for the curriculum content and to develop academic language related to that content. It provides evidence of their ability to use, select, adapt, or design learning tasks, materials, and assessments that offer all of their students equitable access to subject-matter content.

Task 2: The Instructing & Engaging Students in Learning
The Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning task illustrates how candidates work with their students to improve their skills and strategies in the content area during instruction. It provides evidence of their ability to engage students in meaningful tasks, monitor their understanding, and use their responses to students to guide student learning.

Task 3: Assessing Student Learning
The Assessment of Student Learning task illustrates how candidates diagnose student learning needs through the analysis of student work samples. It provides evidence of their ability to: 1) select an assessment tool and criteria that are aligned with their central focus, student standards, and learning objectives; 2) analyze student performance on an assessment in relation to student needs and the identified learning objectives; and 3) use this analysis to identify next steps in instruction for the whole class and individual students.

Task 4: Final Retrospective Reflection
The Final Retrospective Reflection task requires the teacher candidate to reflect on his/her experiences in teaching the learning segment and consider what he/she has
learned about his/her teaching and the learning of his/her students. It provides evidence of their ability to analyze their teaching and their students’ learning to improve teaching practice. The teacher candidate must reflect both on daily lesson plans and on the entire learning segment.

**Providing Evidence: Artifacts and Commentaries**

Candidates are required to submit two different types of evidence throughout the teaching event. For each of the tasks, candidates submit teaching artifacts and a written analysis of teaching in the form of narrative commentaries. The artifacts provide the scorer with independent evidence of how instructional strategies were implemented, while the commentaries offer the teacher candidate an opportunity to examine his/her thinking about teaching and help to make the candidate’s thinking visible to others. These commentaries were designed to set a context for understanding, to explain the artifacts and teaching decisions, or are reflections. It is important to note that artifacts and written commentaries can be consistent and supportive or contradictory.

**The Scoring Framework:**

A set of eleven “Guiding Questions” comprise the scoring framework for the PACT/TPA. The Planning and Assessment tasks include three “Guiding Questions,” and the rest of the tasks have two. Each “Guiding Question” (GQ) posed examines the candidate’s performance in a specific area of teaching, and a scoring rubric answers the question through its four levels of descriptors. The tasks, focus of each guiding question, and the number of the rubric that answers each guiding question through its four levels of descriptors are outlined below.

**PLANNING (3GQs)**
1. Planning Focused, Sequenced Instruction
2. Using Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching
3. Planning Assessments to Monitor and Support Student Learning

**INSTRUCTION (2GQs)**
4. Engaging Students in Learning
5. Deepening Student Learning During Instruction

**ASSESSMENT (2GQs)**
6. Analyzing Student Work from an Assessment
7. Using Assessment to Inform Teaching
8. Using Feedback (oral/written) to Guide Student Learning

**REFLECTION (1GQs)**
9. Monitoring Student Progress and Adjusting Instruction
ACADEMIC LANGUAGE (2GQs)
10. Understanding Language Demands of Learning Tasks and Assessments
11. Supporting Academic Language Development

How can I support my student teacher?

Creating a Timeline
Each subject area Teaching Event contains specific content requirements for the learning segment. Determining a learning segment that meets these requirements is the first step to success. It is also important to find the right time to complete the instructional part of the event. The timing must fit the overall timeline that you, the classroom teacher, have created for your classroom, and it must occur when the candidates feel confident in the classroom. It also must occur soon enough for the candidates to complete the post-instruction tasks in time for the Teaching Event to be scored, and formative feedback be given. It is the joint responsibility of the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and Illinois College supervisor to determine the optimal time to complete the learning segment. Therefore, discussion about content and timing should start soon after the student teaching assignment begins. Candidates will be required to provide a timeline to the seminar instructor about one month into the student teaching assignment.

Help with Understanding the Context for Learning
You can help the candidate that you work with by providing information about your school and your students needed for completing the Context for Learning Form and Commentary questions.

Help with Video Recording Logistics and Permissions
Candidates are required to record part of the instruction task, and select a segment that meets the subject area Teaching Event requirements. Candidates may need help with the actual recording process. The following procedures are provided to candidates so that preparations for this can start early. In addition, parental permission for the video recording will be necessary if your school does not have a blanket approval on record. A parent letter is provided that explains the use of the video recording for the Teaching Event.

Procedures for Classroom Video Recording
Adapted from the list created by PACT Central, last updated 1/7/09, these procedures note the scoring expectations for the video recorded portion of the Teaching Event along with advised preparations and considerations for video recording.

Introduction
These procedures are provided to help you produce video clips that clearly represent the teaching and learning in your classroom. In order to capture elements of instruction and student learning, you will need to produce video clips of high audio and video
quality. The procedures below will help you successfully produce video clips with minimum problems.

**Preparation and Practice**
First, we do NOT expect a Hollywood production. It is important, however, that the quality of the video recorded activities be sufficient for scorers to understand what happened in your classroom. As a general rule of thumb, sound quality is generally more important than video quality to understanding the teaching and learning being captured. All teacher candidates are required to use the video cameras purchased by the Illinois College Education Department for the video recording required for Task 2 of the Teaching Event—no exceptions. The candidate is responsible for providing scorers with video clips of high audio and video quality.

If you are unfamiliar with the video recording process or the video equipment, consider the following resources for video recording assistance.

- Your cooperating/master teacher (who can assist you with video recording)
- Your Illinois College supervisor (who can assist you with video recording)
- Another student teacher who has done or is doing videotaping (who can assist you with video recording)
- Members of the Illinois College Technology staff who are knowledgeable about video recording; help desk

All teacher candidates will be required to plan, teach, and record a practice lesson early in the student teaching semester. After recording the lesson and completing a self-assessment, the candidate is to schedule an appointment with his/her college supervisor to view and discuss the video. During the meeting, the college supervisor should assist the teacher candidate in looking for instructional clips that provide the types of evidence required in the Teaching Event, Task 2: Instruction.

Plan ahead. Contact Mrs. Lois Taylor in the Illinois College Education Department well in advance to reserve and schedule a video camera for recording the lessons for your teaching event. ltaylor@ic.edu or 217-245-3392

Advise your cooperating/master teacher and the principal at your school of your need to video record lessons for your Teaching Event. Discuss any arrangements for a camera operator with them. If you use a camera operator, look to people who already have approval to be in classrooms, e.g., your cooperating teacher, your Illinois College supervisor, designated student helpers. You will need to request formal approval of others (e.g., fellow student teachers, family friends) from the principal, and it may not be forthcoming.

**Tips for Producing High Quality Video Clips**
Think about where you and your students will be during the activities to be portrayed on the video. Will different activities require students to regroup and move around the classroom? How will the use of instructional materials be recorded? What will the
camera need to capture? If applicable, when should the camera operator zoom in or rotate the camera to a new position? Remember, it is essential that you produce video clips of high audio and video quality so that a scorer can understand what is happening in the classroom.

- Meet with the camera operator to plan the filming prior to video recording your lesson. Share your lesson plan and discuss your plans to capture the teaching and learning.
- Use a sturdy tripod to avoid shaking images which often stem from shots from a hand-held camera.
- Practice the video recording process. This will provide a chance to test the equipment and give your students an opportunity to grow accustomed to the camera.
- Adjust, if necessary, for the light source each time a recording is made. Newer cameras may have a switch for recording in incandescent, florescent, or daylight or may be completely automatic. Do not place the camera facing the window or other bright sources of light.
- If you are having trouble hearing yourself and/or the students, try placing the camera closer to the action OR use an external omnidirectional dynamic microphone plugged into the “EXT MIC” jack on the camera OR wear a lapel mike and repeat questions or comments from students who are not nearby. Confirm that this turns the internal microphone off. If the camera operator wears headphones plugged into the camera, the sound quality can be monitored during recording.
- For safety reasons, as much as possible, tape extension cords to the floor with duct tape.
- During video recording, don’t worry about calling students by name, or having them address you by name. Note that names or other identifying information heard on the video clips will remain confidential to the scorers. (PACT Central © 2009 PACT, last updated: 1/6/09) www.pacttpa.org

Reserving/Scheduling Video Cameras:

**All student teachers are to use the Flip Video cameras purchased by the Illinois College Education Department for the filming required to successfully complete the Teaching Event. (No Exceptions)**

*Again, please plan ahead and be respectful of the needs of others. There is a limited number of cameras to be shared among all education students. Please arrange to check out the camera on the Friday before you plan to teach the learning segment for your teaching event. Remember to save the video recordings to your computer daily so you can return the camera to the Education Department as soon as the lessons in your learning segment are completed.*
Returning the camera promptly is imperative as other teacher candidates need access.
*Note: The teacher candidate is responsible for the camera and its safe keeping while it is checked out to her/him. If a teacher candidate checks out a camera in her/his name, then she/he is responsible for returning that camera in person.

Please contact Mrs. Lois Taylor in the Illinois College Education Department well in advance to reserve and schedule a video camera for recording the lessons for your teaching event: ltaylor@ic.edu or 217-245-3392.

Parent Permission Needed for Video Recording:
Cooperating teachers, college supervisors, and teacher candidates should inform the principal and district administrators of the video recording requirement for Task 3 of the Teaching Event and the need for parent/guardian consent for their student to appear in a 15-20 minute video of one or more lessons taught by the teacher candidate as part of their Teaching Event learning segment.

Some of our district's have video recording policies and have obtained parent/guardian permission prior to or at the beginning of the school year. If your district does not have a video recording policy with parent/guardian permission already in place, on the following page is an example of a letter informing parents/guardians of the teacher candidate’s presence in the classroom and of the requirements of the Teacher Performance Assessment each candidate must complete. The letter ends by requesting parent/guardian consent for their child/student to appear in the video portion of the TPA. This sample letter may be used as a model and adapted for distribution in your district.
Sample Teaching Performance Assessment Parent/Guardian Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This semester, your child’s class is working with __________________________, a student teacher from Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois. During the student teaching semester, all teacher credential candidates are required to complete a Teaching Performance Assessment. The assessment contains a 15 – 20 minute video of one or more lessons. Although the video will show both the student teacher and various students, the primary focus is on the student teacher’s instruction, not on the students in the class. The recording will only be used by faculty to assess the student teacher’s performance and evaluate our program effectiveness. The assessment also contains samples of student work as evidence of learning. No student last names will appear on any submitted materials, and all materials will be kept confidential.

Please complete and return the Permission Form to document your permission for these activities.

Sincerely,

Joan McQuillan
Illinois College Teacher Performance Assessment Coordinator
Illinois College Student Teaching Coordinator
Education Department

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PERMISSION FORM

Student Name  _____________________________________________________________

School/Teacher  ____________________________________________________________

I am the parent/legal guardian of the child named above. I have received and read your letter regarding the Illinois College student teacher in my child’s classroom and agree to the following:

(Please check the appropriate blank below.)

____  I DO give permission for my child to appear on a video recording and understand my child’s name will not appear in any written material accompanying the recording.

____  I DO NOT give permission for my child to appear on the video recording, and understand that he/she will be seated outside of the recorded activities.

________________________________________  _____________________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian                  Date
What level of assistance is appropriate?

The Teaching Event as an assessment plays a role in recommending candidates for a teaching credential. Therefore, it is important that faculty, supervisors, cooperating teachers, peers, and other educators offering assistance understand the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate support to candidates as they work on completing the Teaching Event.

The Teaching Event should document the work of candidates and their students in their classrooms; educators offering support should discourage any attempts to fabricate evidence or plagiarize work. Given the demonstrated value of collegiality in education and the placement of the Teaching Event within an educational program, PACT/TPA encourages collaboration but is also interested in ensuring the authenticity of the assessment submission. Therefore the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable support are being made explicit in this document to support a consistent understanding across PACT/TPA institutions.

Candidates are learning how to teach and being guided by more experienced teachers. Professional conversations about teaching and learning are not only appropriate, but desirable. The Teaching Event can and should allow candidates to draw upon these conversations as they create their own understandings of teaching and learning and apply them in the teaching decisions that they make. However, educators providing support should avoid telling candidates what to say in the Teaching Event. Support providers should ensure that the teaching decisions and thinking reflected in the Teaching Event are the candidate’s personal integration of his/her individual experience, research and theory, and insights by other educators about the type of teaching and learning reflected in the learning segment.

Acceptable forms of support for constructing the Teaching Event include:

- Explaining the general design of curriculum materials or instructional and assessment strategies, leaving it to candidates to make selections and/or adaptations based on perceptions of their students' strengths and needs and on the content to be taught.

- Making referrals to curriculum materials, professional and research articles on issues the candidate is thinking about, experienced teachers, and PACT/TPA support documents. Many, if not most, candidates will use or adapt curriculum materials developed by others; they should just cite the source, including materials from experienced teachers. It is up to each candidate to explain how the materials are appropriate for their students and the relevant learning objectives and standards.

- Asking probing or clarifying questions that encourage candidates to deepen their analysis of and reflection on the artifacts, commentary prompts, and/or their responses and to communicate these analyses and reflections more clearly.
**Unacceptable** forms of support for constructing the Teaching Event include:

- Making choices of curriculum materials or instructional strategies (other than those required by the cooperating teacher/school/district) for the candidate

- Providing your own analysis of the candidate’s students or artifacts or offering alternative responses to commentary prompts

- Suggesting specific changes to be made in a draft Teaching Event rather than asking questions aimed at helping candidates reflect on a draft and reach their own conclusions about needed changes

- Providing intensive coaching for candidates perceived to be weak that is aimed at helping them pass the Teaching Event rather than at improving their teaching competence, e.g., extensive focused feedback on repeated drafts leading to the final submission

- Editing the Teaching Event

In summary, educators and peers providing support to candidates completing Teaching Events should take care that it reflects the understanding of the candidate with respect to the teaching and learning during the learning segment documented and is an authentic representation of the candidates work.