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# Meeting NCATE Standard 4: One University's Plan to Help Preservice Teachers Develop the Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions Necessary to Ensure that All Students Learn

Jo-Anne Kerr and Keith Dils

Standard 4-Diversity of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requires that preservice teachers, or candidates, demonstrate and apply proficiencies related to diversity. NCATE provides the following explanation for inclusion of this standard:

America's classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse; over 40 percent of the students in P-12 classrooms are students of color. Twenty percent of the students have at least one foreign-born parent, many with native languages other than English and from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Growing numbers of students are classified as having disabilities. At the same time, teachers of color are less than 20 percent of the teaching force. As a result, most students do not have the opportunity to benefit from a diverse teaching force. Therefore, all teacher candidates must develop proficiencies for working effectively with students and families from diverse populations and with exceptionalities to ensure that all students learn. Regardless of whether they live in areas with great diversity, candidates must develop knowledge of diversity in the United States and the world, professional dispositions

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that respect and value differences, and skills for working with diverse populations (NCATE 2008a, 36).

To that end, preservice teachers need to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to enable them to successfully work with diverse populations of students. In turn, teacher education programs must have in place curricula and experiences beyond the classroom so that candidates learn about diversity and the implications it has for pedagogy. However, providing extracurricular experiences to foster a deeper understanding of issues relative to diversity may be more challenging than offering coursework that teaches candidates about diversity, particularly in higher education institutions and teacher preparation programs that face "...geographic isolation in relatively homogeneous settings" (Mitchell with Yamagishi 2004, 7). Therefore, this article addresses that challenge through a description of efforts undertaken by the teacher education program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), a relatively homogeneous, mid-to-large sized public university,<sup>1</sup> to meet NCATE's diversity standard and to earn national accreditation. We begin with an overview of initial steps taken to meet NCATE Standard 4 followed by an explanation of the plan's origin. Next, we elucidate the specifics of our plan. Finally, we examine assessment, explaining how data are generated and then conclude by noting how the plan allows for continual development and improvement.

## **A Plan to Meet NCATE Standard 4**

As an initial step in meeting accreditation standards, NCATE requires teacher preparation institutions to create a conceptual framework that:

...establishes the shared vision for a unit's efforts in preparing educators to work effectively in P-12 schools. It provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability. The conceptual framework is knowledge based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit and institutional mission, and continuously evaluated (NCATE 2008a, 12).

To that end, IUP developed a 49 page conceptual framework (Indiana University of Pennsylvania 2005).

As part of its conceptual framework, IUP articulated "diversity proficiencies" that IUP teacher candidates are expected to develop in their undergraduate and/or graduate educations, using Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) principles three through five:

- Principle 3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning; creates instructional opportunities adapted to diverse learners.
- Principle 4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- Principle 5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation (Maryland State Department of Education 2004; IUP 2005, 15).

Candidate outcomes were then derived from reviewing the literature in the areas listed below, especially the Danielson (2007) model.

These included:

- Demonstrating cultural competence;
- Demonstrating knowledge of students;
- Creating an environment of respect and rapport;
- Establishing a culture for learning;
- Creating an expectation that all students can learn.

With these initial steps in place, we then turned to designing a plan that would allow us to meet NCATE Standard 4.

**The Plan’s Origins: Actions in Response to Collected Data on Diversity**

At IUP, a Diversity Task Force was established to review employer survey data and to design a plan for improvement related to NCATE Standard 4. Employer, cooperating teacher, and alumni surveys all suggested that IUP teacher education candidates and graduates performed well in diverse settings. For example, in 2008, employers (n=73), using a scale of 1-5 (1=Clear weakness; 2= Less than adequate; 3=Adequate; 4=more than adequate; 5=Clear Strength), rated IUP teacher education graduates as follows (mean score in parentheses):

- Demonstrate a commitment to equity (3.80);
- Are culturally sensitive (3.74);
- Hold high expectations for all students (3.80);
- Interact with students in developmentally appropriate ways (3.89).

While the data above demonstrate that employers believed that graduates generally performed adequately in diverse settings, a plan was needed to formalize assessments and to collect assessment data

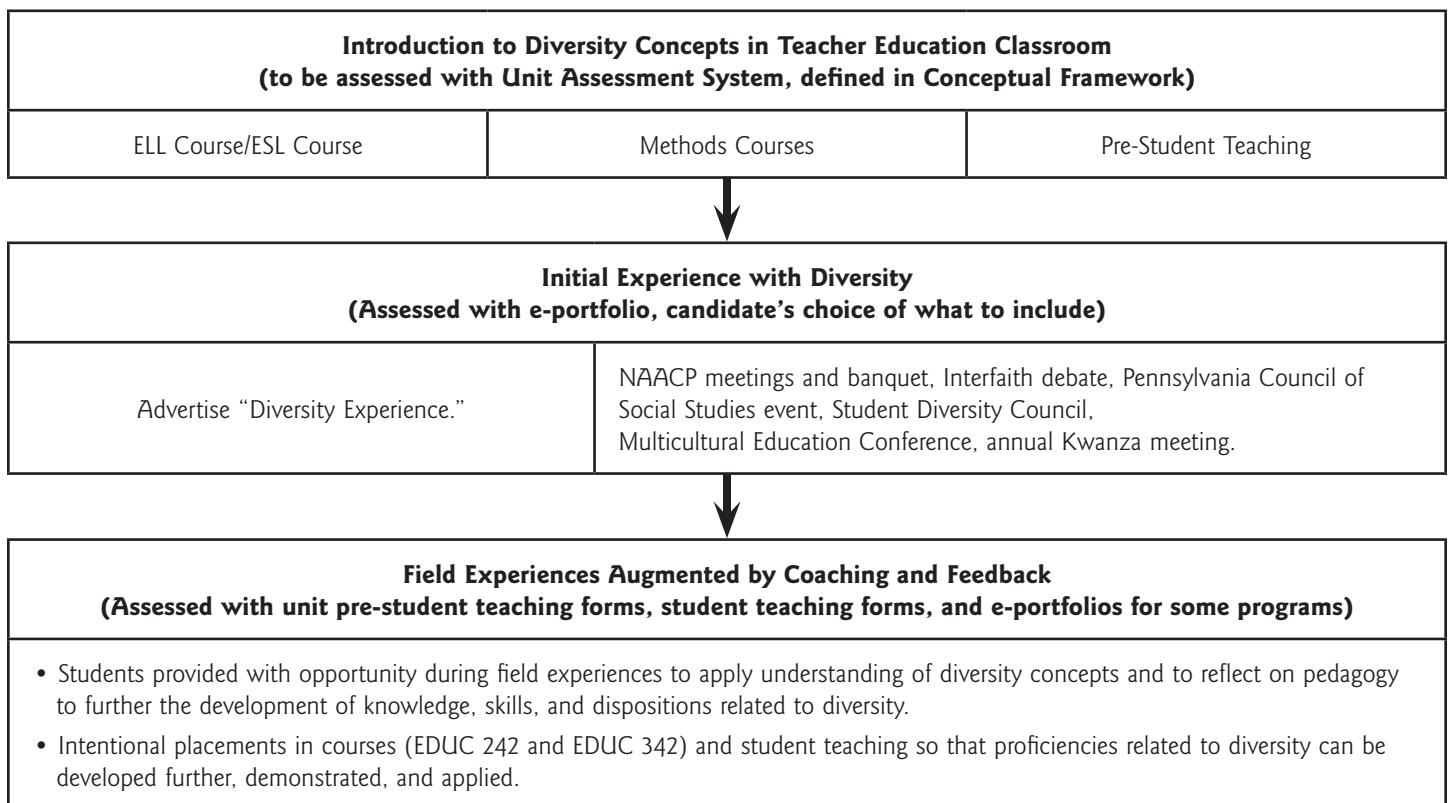
concerning diversity earlier in the program. Therefore, the Task Force turned to the job of designing a program that would allow for a systematic means by which “Candidates and faculty regularly review candidate assessment data on candidates’ ability to work with all students...” at key points or stages in the curriculum (NCATE 2008b, Standard 4a., Target level). The flow chart in the Figure summarizes the sequence of course work, diversity experiences, and field experiences with the stages of diversity assessments and data collection for IUP.

**Meeting NCATE Standard 4: What We Envisioned**

Here we examined the phases or progression of experiences that we planned for our candidates in the area of diversity. For the first phase, we used our B.S. in English Education program courses to illustrate how this part of the plan would help preservice teachers develop skills and knowledge about diversity. (See Table 1.)

During the second phase of the plan, students begin to link knowledge and skills gained in the first phase to actual experiences with different types of diversity through participation in a variety of experiences, which we call our “Diversity Series.” Here candidates develop a deeper understanding of diversity by participating in events related to diversity and attendant issues. Reflection, incorporated into students’ electronic portfolios, gives candidates time to carefully think about what they have experienced and observed and to make connections to prior understandings and to future pedagogical decisions. Writing fosters deeper and clearer understandings of the complexities of diversity and the many ways that diversity manifests itself in society. Furthermore, it presents students with the opportunity to delve

**Figure**  
**Flowchart of Teacher Candidate Diversity Experiences**



**Table 1**  
***B.S. in English Education Program Courses to Assist Preservice Teachers to Develop Skills and Knowledge about Diversity\****

<b>Courses</b>	<b>How Diversity is Addressed</b>
ENGL 323 Teaching Reading and Literature	Introduction to reading as a socio-psycholinguistic process provides students with opportunity to consider the implications of reading being a transaction between text and reader and the importance of reader's stance. Activities designed to ask students to take on different roles as readers serve to show them how diversities affect understandings of texts. Readings in theory and research provide students with ideas for pedagogically sound lessons. Lesson plans include adaptations for exceptionalities.
ENGL 324 Teaching and Evaluating Writing	A combination of reading and assignments provide opportunity to build upon professional education courses, such as EDEX 301. Students include adaptations for diverse learners and students with exceptionalities when designing lesson plans. Readings provide information about how to help diverse learners with writing assignments, including conferencing, portfolio assessment, and, appropriate modifications. Attention to specific types of diversity include: Second language learners; learning support students; students with attention disorders; and students whose home language and/or dialect differ in significant ways from standard English.
ENGL 426 ESL Materials and Methods	Students are introduced to ESL theory and practice. State-of-the-art approaches are presented as well as material adaptation and design. An overview of how English as a second language and bilingual education programs are operationalized in various ways across the U.S. and abroad is included.
EDUC 242 Pre-Student Teaching I	Thirty-five hours of observation at a school site with an accompanying assignment and a "Discovery Paper" serve to acclimate students to the classroom as preservice teachers. Preparation for observation includes readings focusing on best practices and how to meet the needs of diverse populations of students in the English/language arts classroom and practice with observing and taking field notes. In the "Discovery Paper" students describe the classroom from the perspective of participant-observer, paying particular attention to gender, ethnicity, race, language, and exceptionalities, and how diversity affects classroom atmosphere, interactions, and pedagogy. The "Discovery Paper" includes an analysis; students may choose to analyze and reflect on how teachers meet the needs of diverse learners. The observation also serves to familiarize students with available resources to assist teachers who work with students with exceptionalities.
EDUC 342 Pre-Student Teaching II	The second clinical experience includes 35 additional hours of observation in a classroom. Preservice teachers write another "Discovery Paper," in which they again describe the setting and offer an analysis of one aspect of the classroom, which may focus on diversity. During this experience, cooperating teachers are asked to allow preservice teachers to work with small groups of students and, if possible, to teach a brief lesson. An additional requirement of the course is teaching a lesson to students in one of the university's ENGL 101 College Writing course sections. Lesson plans include adaptations for learners with exceptionalities.
EDUC 452 Teaching English and Communication in Secondary School	Taken the semester prior to student teaching, this methods course is designed to help preservice teachers synthesize their content knowledge learning and pedagogical learning through the design and implementation of lessons plans, one of which is taught to high school students. They also design a unit plan and compile a showcase portfolio that includes artifacts that indicate their proficiency. Materials for this course emphasize teaching media literacy and reaching diverse learners; thus students are asked to use technology (audio, visual, computer, multimedia, etc.) and to demonstrate knowledge of affirming diversity in the classroom. Lesson plans that students design must demonstrate a knowledge of rationale, objectives, procedure, engagement, adaptations, and assessment. Course readings include texts that address issues of diversity.

\* Methods courses and required professional education courses.

more deeply into issues relevant to diversity, such as the sociopolitical context of education, equitable learning experiences for all students, and the importance of affirming diversity in the classroom. It is in this phase of our plan that teacher candidates may begin to develop a disposition toward diversity that will prepare them for student teaching.

Because candidates participate in the Diversity Series while they are taking methods and pre-student teaching courses, teachers of these courses can use candidates' experiences and their reflections on Diversity Series experiences to augment readings and assignments and to stimulate class discussion. Candidates may also choose to share reflections with their peers. These ancillary uses of the Diversity Series experience can thus be used to inform lesson planning and to foster the development of an appropriate disposition related to diversity.

During the final phase of the plan--student teaching--candidates are expected to have the knowledge, skills, and disposition related to diversity that inform all aspects of their teaching, including creating a productive and well-managed classroom environment; engaging in sound preparation; and effectively planning and implementing instruction. As in the second phase, teacher candidates receive ongoing feedback and coaching from cooperating teachers and university supervisors that encourage collaborative problem solving and reflection on issues of diversity as they play out in the classroom. Knowledge and skills are honed and practiced, with professional dispositions related to diversity developed further.

**Assessment and Generation of Data for Program Review**

For NCATE reviews, it is incumbent upon programs to provide data that indicate candidates' proficiencies related to diversity. Each phase of our program includes methods for assessing knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

During the first phase candidates are introduced to the concept of diversity. Many of the courses in this phase provide performance-based assessments requiring candidates to analyze and evaluate teaching scenarios involving diversity. Instructors often use video clips of teaching vignettes or scenarios to set the stage for analysis and discussion. The instructor's task is to coach candidates so that they are able to identify effective teacher behaviors. Instructors also lead candidates to evaluate why certain teacher behaviors are effective. The intent is to "plant the seeds" for how to act in

similar situations in the field. These courses also include instruction in pedagogy so that candidates know how to adapt lessons to the needs of diverse learners. Because the NCATE standards suggest the use of diverse teacher education faculty, and because IUP is not always able to provide such faculty for every class, guest speakers are used to stimulate in-class analysis of issues related to diversity. The initial performance-based assessments used for classroom activities and projects are described in the syllabus. However, assessments that allow the collection of data across the unit do not take place until the next stage.

With the second phase, candidates are encouraged to see, experience, and reflect on diversity outside the curriculum. Here, candidates attend an activity or event involving diversity. This "Diversity Series" allows candidates to pick from a wide range of events. Many of these events are organized and promoted by the IUP's Office of Social Equity and Civic Engagement and include the Pennsylvania chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education diversity conference, which provides two days of seminars on diversity issues in education. Also included are the annual Symposium on Gender and Sexuality sponsored by IUP's GLBT Commission; the IUP President's Commission on the Status of Women; Mosaic meetings;<sup>2</sup> and the IUP African American Cultural Center workshop series. These events are populated by people far more diverse than students found in stage one and provide them with opportunities to reflect on their experiences and interactions as they apply to what they learned in introductory courses.

An electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) is used to structure, assign, and assess these activities and reflections. This assignment is required of all teacher candidates and is structured with well-defined grading rubrics derived from the IUP Conceptual Framework and NCATE diversity standards. The rubric for the assignment was designed to measure candidates' ability to meet INTASC Principle 3. (See Table 2 for rubric). Candidate advisors view e-portfolio artifacts and reflections and evaluate them using the rubric. Assessments are recorded on paper scoring guides and submitted to the College of Education Dean's office so that staff can enter the data into an electronic data base referred to as the Unit Assessment System. With the Unit Assessment System, data can be aggregated and disaggregated so that trends can be seen. Table 3 provides an example of e-portfolio assessment data concerning diversity.

**Table 2**  
**Rubric for to Measurement of Candidate Ability to Meet INTASC Principle 3**

<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Target</b>
The diversity standard does not have an entry; or There is no correlation between the diversity standard and entries; or The diversity entry provides no evidence that the diversity standard has been met.	The diversity standard has at least one entry.  There is a correlation between the diversity standard and the entry.  The diversity entry provides evidence that the diversity standard has been met.	The diversity standard has more than one entry.  There is an obvious correlation between the diversity standard and the entries.  All diversity entries provide evidence that the diversity standard has been met.

**Table 3**  
**E-Portfolio Assessment Data Concerning Diversity**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Evaluation I</b>		<b>Evaluation II</b>	
	<b>Number of Evaluations</b>	<b>Mean Rating*</b>	<b>Number of Evaluations</b>	<b>Mean Rating*</b>
Art Education	15	2.2	6	2.7
Business Education	0	0.0	2	2.5
Biology Education	5	2.6	2	2.5
Chemistry Education	0	0.0	0	0.0
Early Childhood/Pre K-6	12	2.3	0	0.0
Ed of Exceptional Persons	4	2.3	12	2.2
Deaf Education	5	2.2	0	0.0
Elementary Education	59	2.2	18	2.1
Elementary ED/CCAC	22	1.5	0	0.0
ECED Pre K-6	0	0.0	0	0.0
English Education	2	2.0	2	2.5
English/MATE	7	2.1	2	3.0
Earth & Space Science	0	0.0	0	0.0
Family & Consumer Science	7	1.4	17	2.0
French Education	0	0.0	0	0.0
Health & Phys Ed	13	2.0	5	2.6
Math Education	9	2.0	4	2.0
Music Education	16	2.4	3	1.7
Physical Education	0	0.0	0	0.0
Spanish Education	5	1.8	1	3.0
Social Science Ed/Anthro	0	0.0	0	0.0
Social Studies Ed/Econ	1	3.0	0	0.0
Social Studies Ed/Geog	0	0.0	0	0.0
Social Studies Ed/Hist	14	2.4	5	2.2
Social Science Ed/Soc	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>All Programs</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>2.2</b>

\* 0 = Not Rated; 1 = Unacceptable; 2 = Acceptable; 3 = Target.

During the third and final phase, candidates apply their knowledge to field experiences and student teaching. Candidates are placed in P-12 schools with diverse students. Demographic records of these schools concerning race/ethnicity, students with special needs, and students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch are maintained so that each candidate has experiences with a wide range of students and is able to apply diversity proficiencies to practice. Teacher educators in these schools provide coaching and feedback so that refinements to candidates' approaches to diversity can be made. A grading rubric, derived from the IUP conceptual framework, and

local, state, national, and NCATE Standards is used to guide candidate performance, assist in the coaching and feedback, and aid in assessment. (See Table 4.) In a manner similar to that of the e-portfolio, data are collected and entered into an electronic assessment system. Table 5 provides an example of a summary of results of diversity criteria from field experiences.

**Table 4**  
**Rubric for Third Phase of Candidate Assessment**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Target</b>
1. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities and support their intellectual, social and personal development.	Fails to provide learning experiences that are appropriate to the cognitive, social, and personal developmental level of the learner.	Provides learning experiences that are appropriate to the cognitive, social, and personal developmental level of the learner.	Systematically provides learning experiences that are appropriate to the cognitive, social, and personal developmental level of the learner.
2. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.	Does not promote the belief that all students can learn and/or does not adapt instruction to accommodate the needs of learners.	Promotes the belief that all students can learn. Adapts instruction to accommodate the needs of special needs learners. Activities reflect opportunities for both student engagement and expression.	Promotes the belief that all students can learn. Differentiates instruction to accommodate the needs of all learners. Activities reflect a variety of opportunities for both student engagement and expression.
3. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.	Does not implement individual or group motivational strategies, or the strategies implemented are not relevant.	Implements individual and group motivational strategies that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.	Designs and implements individual and group motivational strategies that spur curiosity, while encouraging positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
4. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.	May design instructional plans that deal with meaningful subject matter and curriculum goals, but fails to connect with students' experiences and cultures.	Designs instructional plans that show evidence of connecting students' experiences and cultures to meaningful subject matter and curriculum goals.	Uses a systematic approach to investigate students' experiences and cultures and uses this information to design instructional plans that connect to meaningful subject matter and curriculum goals.

### Planning for Continual Development and Improvement

IUP's three phase approach to teaching diversity is shaped by the idea that teacher candidates must be guided through a scaffolded series of experiences to develop an understanding of diversity, inclusion, and effective pedagogies so that they can mindfully apply these to their teaching. Our assessment system has been expanded to structure and assess these new experiences. We have gone from gathering diversity data from employer, alumni, and cooperating teacher surveys to gathering data via e-portfolio and student teacher assessments. By doing so, we have created a better way of seeing how our candidates and programs are dealing with diversity at key points in the curriculum. We will continue to collect data and reflect on our performance. By doing so, our intention is to continue to improve and develop our plan for preparing candidates so that all of their future students will learn.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) currently enrolls 14,638 students of which 13% are ethnic/racial minorities. Founded in 1875, IUP offers 145 undergraduate, 61 graduate, and 10 doctoral programs with 2,076 undergraduate, 698 graduate, and 101 doctoral degrees awarded in 2008-2009.

<sup>2</sup> According to the IUP student organization web site, Mosaic is an all-inclusive organization whose mission is to promote equality and bring cultural awareness to all students at IUP through discussions and events. See <http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=86625>.

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**Table 5**  
**Field Experience Results**

Program	First Placement		Second Placement	
	Number of Evaluations	Mean Rating*	Number of Evaluations	Mean Rating*
Art Education	7	2.7	7	3.0
Business Education	2	3.0		
Biology Education	2	2.0		
Chemistry Education	0	0.0		
Early Childhood/Pre K-6	0	0.0		
Ed of Exceptional Persons	10	2.8	10	2.7.0
Deaf Education	1	3.0	1	3.0
Elementary Education	18	2.7	2	3.0
English Education	2	3.0		
English/MATE	2	3.0		
Earth & Space Science	0	0.0		
Family & Consumer Science	10	2.8		
French Education	0	0.0		
Health & Phys Ed	6	2.7	7	2.6
Math Education	4	2.5		
Music Education	11	2.4	18	2.5
Physical Education	0	0.0		
Spanish Education	2	2.0		
Social Science Ed/Anthro	0	0.0		
Social Studies Ed/Econ	0	0.0		
Social Studies Ed/Geog	0	0.0		
Social Studies Ed/Hist	5	2.8		
Social Science Ed/Soc	0	0.0		
<b>All Programs</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2.7</b>

\* 0 = Not Rated; 1 = Unacceptable; 2 = Acceptable; 3 = Target.

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