Tk 20, the School of Education Unit Assessment, and Accountability System

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Abstract

In 2013, Coppin State University's School of Education selected Tk20 as its Unit Assessment and Accountability System (UAAS). Prior to 2013, the School of Education used several assessment systems such as Planet Coppin, One Note, Share Point, and Blackboard Grade book. It also enlisted individual staff members to gather and compile hardcopies of student assignments and electronic portfolios. But despite these various systems and supports, they could not generate the level of data-based reports the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) required to demonstrate compliance for Standard 2. Standard 2 requires an assessment system and unit evaluation (NCATE, 2008). Students have access to Tk20 and can use it for seven years to build their professional, electronic portfolio, and career advancement.

When the School of Education selected Tk20 for the purpose of meeting accreditation requirements, it had already piloted Task stream before making a final decision. Task stream provides documentation and data in a central online system to manage documents, faculty credentials, including qualifications, research, scholarly contributions, course load, professional development, and tenure. It streamlines the process with pre-entered standards and pre-built report templates. The selection of Tk20 for the School of Education has been a beneficial, courageous, and right choice for the School of Education, the only unit at Coppin State University to use this assessment tool. Administrators and academic leadership from both the university and School of Education reached a decision to adopt Tk20 after much discussion, review, and collaboration.

These are among the reasons Tk20 became the choice. It helps universities meet accreditation requirements and show evidence that it meets Standard 2. The work of faculty is extremely important when it comes to accreditation. Faculty has a responsibility of complying with Program Master Plans to make sure candidates are pursuing sequential coursework. Faculty members must collaborate, design, implement, and evaluate signature assignments that are content knowledge-based and show evidence of meeting standards.

In November 2015, Coppin's School of Education successfully met NCATE requirements for having a unit assessment system in place. Tk20 has transformed the School of Education and encourages faculty and administrators to strive for continuous improvement. The innovation of faculty in creating signature assignments aligned with standards and the Tk20 integration of technology has propelled the School of Education to the next level. The next level means moving forward and advancing to greater heights ahead.

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The demands of accreditation required the School of Education to designate one day a week for this work. "Faculty Fridays" became the name given to time faculty designated to gather, collaborate, reflect on and make adjustments to Program Master Plans (PMPs), Signature Assignments, rubrics, and data analysis. PMPs, however, required a particular and ongoing focus. PMPs served as the blueprint for navigating through such programs as Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Administrative I Certification, and Contemporary Educational Leadership. Faculty and candidates also benefit when they are able to meet goals and objectives for program completion. At the same time, the process ensures that department chairs and deans have access to needed data and projections. Without PMPs, this level of transparency would not be possible.

Through their level of collaboration, deans and department chairs also discuss the number of students in each program; assess data which guides scheduling, student advisement, and departmental assignments. Milestones are significant in the PMPs. The milestones are strategically placed in the PMPs to recognize career pathway progressions. Such collaboration has helped faculty to learn about and better understand unit programs and erase silos that separated them and their work. Now, with access to collected data and analysis at the end of each semester, faculty can better determine what students know and are able to do. Tk20 facilitates the communication of critical information like this that supports continuous improvement and growth. The success of Faculty Fridays gave the School of Education confidence, knowledge, and a foundation for competency-based education. As pre-candidates and in-service candidates prepare to be effective educators, this transformation has helped Coppin's School of Education as a sought-after resource for high-quality graduates and prepared educators.

Each program has signature assignments that are submitted in Tk20 for faculty evaluation. The evaluation is based on four levels of standards: (1) unacceptable, (2) partially meets standard, (3) meets standard, and (4) exceeds standard. A rubric guides each student's work in addressing the artifact, assignment, or task. At the end of the semester, the School of Education faculty gathers to discuss and analyze student data. Faculty reflects on these questions about student performance:

1. Did candidates perform at the "meets standard" or better level?
2. What changes should the School of Education make before a signature assignment is given to other candidates?
3. Did the School of Education successfully measure what we intended?
4. How can a signature assignment be improved?
5. What did candidates learn from their program of study?

Today, nearly every industry and business sector, from the federal government to hospitals, to colleges and universities are guided by a system of accountability. Teacher preparation is no different. At Coppin State University's School of Education, Tk20 has become the place where data collection, analysis, and access intersect and where transparency is promoted. What's emerged in a short time is a model for how teacher preparation programs can efficiently support its candidates and use evidence to showcase what they are able to do as well as lead when they enter their classrooms or schools.

Reference

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2008). *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Institutions,* NCATE: Washington, DC.