1. Narrative

Section a. Description of the assessment and its use in the program
As part of their first fall student teaching experience, and supported by the experiences taking place in their concurrent literacy methods course, our early childhood teacher candidates are required to develop, implement and evaluate a complete innovative literacy unit that reflects the kind of teaching and learning promoted by our program and by NAEYC. Their work on this project is also informed by detailed scoring rubrics (see Section f) which are intended to help them (as well as the instructor) evaluate the extent to which they have addressed (1) each key component of the project, (2) relevant NAEYC standards for teacher candidates and (3) relevant proficiencies among those identified as targets for all teacher candidates at the Warner School (referred to as “WS proficiencies”).

Section b. Alignment with NAEYC standards
This assignment is intended to assess our candidates’ ability not only to plan high quality lessons, but also to implement those lessons effectively so as to have an impact on their students’ learning. Part I of the evaluation form (see Section f) addresses whether specific elements we have identified as critical to plan, implement and evaluate a high quality instructional unit have been satisfactorily addressed by the candidate – including analyzing their students’ work and learning (see Unit Rubric #8); therefore, as it was the case with the Lesson Plan Assignment discussed earlier (see Assessment #3), while there is no one-to-one correlation of these rubrics with specific NAEYC indicators, when taken as a whole they help determine whether the candidate shows evidence for most of the elements within NAEYC standards 3, 4 and 5. To make this relation more explicit, in Part II of the evaluation form we ask the instructor to evaluate the extent to which the candidate’s work provides evidence that s/he has met specific elements within NAEYC standards 3, 4 and 5. Part III of the evaluation form instead requires the instructor to evaluate the extent to which the candidate has demonstrated proficiency with respect to relevant WS proficiencies – and given the correspondence between some of these proficiencies and specific NAEYC indicators listed in the narrative for Assessment 4, these scores also provide additional and relevant information about our candidates’ performance.

Section c. Data findings
All five candidates who took the literacy methods course during the three-year reporting period completed this assessment successfully, as they all scored a 3 or above on all rubrics in Part I; therefore, they were all able to pass their student teaching experience. As illustrated by average scores between 3.20 and 4 in the various rubrics within Parts I and II, over half of the candidates scored 3 or above in each of the rubrics, and several candidates had an outstanding performance in this assignment (i.e., received a score of 4) in many of the components of this assessment.

With respect to specific elements within NAEYC Standard #3 (Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families), all candidates demonstrated an upper level
of proficiency in the sub-components 3.a (understanding assessment) and 3.b (knowing and using assessment) as evidenced by the averages of 3.8; most candidates demonstrated basic proficiency with respect to sub-components 3.c (practicing responsible assessment), and outstanding proficiency in 3.d. (assessment partnerships).

With respect to specific elements within NAEYC Standard #4 (Using developmentally effective approaches), most candidates demonstrated outstanding proficiency with respect to sub-component 4.a (connecting with children and families), 4.b. (using effective approaches), and 4.d. (reflecting on own practice).

These results are consistent with the scores received with respect to the WS proficiencies relevant to this assessment, where candidates’ scores varied between 3 and 4, with average scores ranging from 3.20 to 4.

Section d. Data interpretation

These results show that, by the end of their student teaching in a K-2 setting, all our early childhood teacher candidates over this three-year reporting period demonstrated minimum proficiency and frequently an outstanding proficiency to plan, implement and analyze innovative ELA units. The innovative units our candidates produced also demonstrate basic and outstanding level of proficiency with respect to all the sub-components of NAEYC standards #3, #4, and #5, with all candidates achieving an outstanding level of proficiency with respect to many of the NAEYC sub-components (i.e., 3.a., 3.b., 4.b., 5.b).

It is worth noting that most candidates do this Innovative Unit Project in their first student teaching experience; therefore, a “basic proficiency” evaluation with respect to most standards and proficiencies can be considered sufficient progress. At the same time, assessment data from other key assessment (see, in particular, Assessment 4 and 6) suggest that candidates will eventually achieve at least basic proficiency with respect to all sub-components of NAEYC standards before graduation.
2. Assessment documentation

Section e. Information on the assessment tool

The following written information and guidelines are provided to all candidates, along with a copy of the rubrics used for their evaluation (see Section f).

Warner School of Education – University of Rochester
INNOVATIVE UNIT: EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guidelines for teacher candidates

All teacher candidates are required to design and implement innovative units in their student teaching and/or practicum experiences. As in the case of lesson plans, we believe it is important in at least one case to make explicit your thinking processes about design, implementation, and assessment. The following guidelines explain the minimum required components we expect in innovative unit papers. This assessment, in conjunction with final student teaching evaluations, will determine if a candidate will “pass” student teaching. Assessment of the innovative unit paper will occur on two levels: 1) Candidate ability to design, implement, and analyze the unit as described in these guidelines, and 2) Candidate ability to address in the unit the relevant standards set by their professional organization and Warner School proficiencies. The rubric is divided into three parts and is included in this packet. Content area faculty may provide additional rubrics specific to that specialization.

Required Unit Components:

1. **Introduction**: This section should provide a brief description of the unit that gives a context for the components of the unit, including an essential question and/or topic addressed if appropriate. Include a clear description of the context of implementation for the unit, including grade level, racial, ethnic and gender make-up of students and teachers, a description of the school and classroom, and whether the implementation occurred in the first or second student teaching/practicum experience.

2. **Theoretical framework**: Provide a clear, well thought out theoretical framework that both guides and provides a foundation for, the unit, using course readings (and outside readings where appropriate). Candidates should state their definition of the content area addressed and their theory of learning. In other words, how does your definition of [literacy, language, science, math, English, social studies] and theory of learning frame the unit? This section should also include a clear rationale for the unit (e.g. why is this unit important? Why will student learning be meaningful and relevant in this unit?).

3. **Goals/Professional Standards**: Describe the overarching goal/s of the unit and connect the goal/s to the larger curriculum in your class (e.g. an integrated curriculum in elementary or the specific content area in secondary). Discuss the professional and/or state standards this unit addresses. Make explicit the specific content addressed and connections to the theoretical framework, curriculum, and overarching unit goal/s.
4. **Objectives**: Clearly articulate the specific unit objectives and connect these objectives to the unit goals and professional standards.

5. **Assessment of Student Learning over Time**: Describe the multiple forms of assessment used across the unit. Include formative, summative, formal, and informal assessments. Explicitly connect your assessment to the theoretical framework, unit goals and objectives, and professional standards. In other words, how will your assessments help you scaffold student learning over time and how will you know you have accomplished your goals? How will your assessments inform instruction?

6. **Pedagogy**: Describe the series of connected lessons and/or experiences in the unit. Include your detailed lesson plans for selected lessons in this section using the lesson plan format given to you. Describe in detail how you will scaffold and support student learning over time, and address any relevant safety considerations.

7. **Unit Implementation**: Describe what happened when you implemented this unit, with particular attention to students’ responses to its main activities. Reflect on what went well and what you would change in future implementations.

8. **Analysis of student learning**: Report the results of a systematic analysis of what your students learned as a result of the unit, making explicit references to goals and objectives, and using data from formal assessments and classroom observations (see number 5 above). Refer as appropriate to the assessment results and student work in an appendix to support your claims.

9. **Unit Analysis**: This section is a detailed analysis of the implementation of the unit that brings together content, theory, and practice. Describe how you have integrated the components of the unit into a coherent whole that produces meaningful and relevant student learning and addresses the goals articulated in Part 2 and 3 of the rubric. Connect the unit implementation with the larger curriculum and theoretical framework described in the introduction.

10. **Appendix**: Include: 1) text of key assignments and assessments, including rubrics or handouts given to students; 2) aggregate assessment data; 3) samples of student work with your comments.

What follows are the rubrics that will be used to evaluate this major assessment. You are expected to provide a self-evaluation of your work using these rubrics; your methods course instructor will do the same independently. **Section f. Scoring guide (Limit: 5 pages)**

*The following scoring rubrics are provided to both the candidate and the instructor evaluating this major assignment.*

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Warner School of Education – University of Rochester
INNOVATIVE UNIT
Scoring guidelines and rubrics

There are three parts to this evaluation:

**Part I:** Designed to evaluate the extent to which the candidate has fulfilled the requirements of this project, as outlined in the detailed description of the assignment. Failing to do so may require the candidate to revise or redo the assignment before he/she can pass the course.

**Part II:** Designed to evaluate the extent to which the candidate has met some key standards about planning and implementing instruction set by his/her professional organization.

**Part III:** Designed to evaluate the extent to which the candidate has met some key proficiencies identified as target for all Warner teacher candidates.

Please remember to complete all three parts. Each part has different rubrics, so please carefully review the instructions provided at the beginning of each part before scoring.

We expect both the candidate and the instructor to independently complete this evaluation.