Closing the Assessment Loop Report 2010
Early Childhood Education Program

Background Information

The Early Childhood Education Program enrolled the first cohort group of students in fall, 2009. Prior to fall, 2009, there were a few students who transitioned from the prior Interdisciplinary major into the current degree. To date, there have been 11 graduates in the program. Current enrollment in the program is about 45 students. The current report includes data from the 11 graduates and is the first report for the current Bachelor of Arts Early Childhood Education Degree program.

Kimberly McDaniel, Director for Assessment and Evaluation submits an annual program assessment report to Dr. Hughes, the Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator who shares the results with the Early Childhood faculty members. The data is reviewed and recommendations for changes in program delivery, curriculum, and course content are considered. In addition to the review of formalized assessment data, early childhood faculty members meet regularly to discuss courses, students, program issues and glean information from student evaluations. All forms of formal and informal information are considered when making program decisions.

Interpretation of Assessment Data

Formal Assessment. The program assessment information for the first year students reflects the level of understanding for child development related to developmental milestones and learning processes. These areas are also aligned with how to observe and assess young children’s learning. There are three courses (ECE 390, ECE 391, SPED 443) in the first year that serve as the primary courses to align with the child development standard for the National Association for Young Children early childhood teacher education standards. The data from our program assessment indicates that 100% of students are meeting requirements at or above the standard level. This finding suggests that faculty members are providing consistent and multiple opportunities for students to create a solid foundation for understanding how young children develop. This is a key element of our program and builds the foundation for subsequent course work in the second and third years. The findings prompted faculty members to discuss ways that further coordination between the three courses can be offered to check for repetition or to ensure different aspects of learning processes are included.

The implementation of the Teacher Work Sample requirement for the internship year was piloted with eight students. Data from this preliminary group of students suggests overall that students are meeting the requirements. The findings are preliminary due to a small data sample and caution is used in the interpretation. For rubric rows with a higher percentage of partial met items faculty will study to determine if there patterns that emerge.

Faculty members have raised the issue to consider shifting the Teacher Work Sample requirement (third year program assessment) into the primary internship. State requirements are pending regarding a new pedagogy assessment in early childhood and faculty recommend that this requirement best be met in the primary internship.
Informal Assessment

Faculty in the early childhood education program review course content each term and meet to exchange ideas. Student evaluations and faculty review of student performance in individual classes supplement the formal program assessment measures and the recommendations from these multiple assessment measures are reflected in the recommendations listed in the next section.

Recommendations

The attached chart provides a reference for the following narrative discussion which highlights the major changes proposed for the WCE Early Childhood Education Program. Through both formal and informal assessment measures the faculty recommend the following changes.

1. Overall Program Changes

A cohort model was established in fall, 2009 which improved the delivery of the degree program allowing students to enroll in classes in a timely fashion. The outcome of this model has greatly increased the relationship building among students and created learning communities that have exemplified the meaning of collaboration. Second, faculty established oral interviews during the application process which provided opportunity for both students and faculty to meet each other and add a “personal” dimension to the application process. Third, practicum and internship sites have been expanded and the establishment of placements that offer working with diverse children and their families was considered.

2. Course Content

A proposal for curriculum changes was made in fall, 2010 to create a new course ECE 437 Guidance for Young Children and to revise ECE 434. Currently, ECE 434 Environments for Young Children includes content related to both the social and physical learning environments. The revised ECE 434 course will replace the content in social environment with content associated with the importance of nature and how that can influence the design of outdoor and indoor environments. The new ECE 437 will focus exclusively on the social environment and examine ways to foster positive guidance strategies with young children.

3. Preschool Internship

In fall, 2010 faculty modified the expectations for the preschool internship which is the first term of a two-term internship requirement (the second term is completed in the primary grades). Modifications were made to better represent the internship experience to meet the requirements of “co-teaching” with interns required to move through 3 levels of teaching which builds to the higher expectations for a lead position in the second term of internship experiences.

4. Teacher Work Sample Requirements

Two changes have been proposed for the program assessment that occurs during the preschool internship. First, it is recommended that the Teacher Work Sample requirement be moved into the primary internship. Faculty members have piloted the implementation of this requirement in the preschool internship and after 3 terms determined that it is a better fit with the curriculum of the primary classroom where “units” are typically designed. In addition, Washington State requirements for a “pedagogy assessment” are in the midst of change and it is likely that by fall, 2011 there will be a new requirement that might replace the current WCE Teacher Work Sample. Thus, the early
childhood faculty members are waiting to make formal recommendations for this requirement pending determination from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The second change would result from the first change listed above. If we change the Teacher Work Sample requirement to the primary internship, it will be necessary to have two terms of primary internship. The first term would require a couple of days of internship and students would be required to complete the requirements for the pedagogy assessment during this first primary internship. The second internship quarter would remain the same.

5. Refining Course Content

There are three changes to course content that were proposed or changed. First, upon reviewing performance on the Teacher Work Sample (program assessment during preschool internship) it was determined that the interns needed more preparation and instruction in the use of a curriculum based assessment tool. Many of our practicum and internship sites are transitioning to the new Teacher Strategies Gold Assessment tool for birth through Kindergarten ages. Thus, our teacher candidates will receive more specific instruction in the new assessment tool to be better prepared to administer the assessment procedures when they graduate.

Second, faculty members discussed the need for more preparation of students for working with English Language Learners. With the addition of practicum and internship sites who serve children and their families use first languages other than English, it is imperative that our teacher candidates be prepared to work with a population of children and families that represents the diverse population in the majority of communities in the United States. Content infused across courses in the program is a possibility and it is possible that faculty consider modifying ECE 380 when the new literacy faculty person is hired.

Lastly, upon review of the formal assessment measures faculty members discussed the need to coordinate content used in the courses of the first year program assessment (ECE 390, ECE 391 and ECSE 443). The combination of the three courses offer ample opportunities for students to acquire the critical and essential foundations for understanding child development processes, milestones, theory and applied practices. Outcomes suggest that students are meeting the standards for this area. Faculty members are formalizing ways to link the content of the courses and to add extend content in particular areas to enhance the courses (refer to attached chart).
## Early Childhood Education Program Changes 2009-2010

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<tr>
<th>Program Element</th>
<th>Data for Program Change</th>
<th>Process for Changes</th>
<th>Changes Made or Recommendations</th>
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| Admissions/Program Delivery-  
Student have difficulty getting into courses in timely manner | Student, staff, faculty feedback-  
Program demographics, application procedures  
Demographics  
Student evaluations, faculty discussions; research current trends in early childhood education | Discussion with early childhood education faculty, chair, staff to admit once a year  
Faculty discussion, review of EC application process  
Discussion with faculty | Fall, 2009 first cohort admitted  
Fall, 2009 changes in application process-group oral interview added  
Sites added in Skagit Valley (Hispanic) |
| Admissions-EC faculty want introductions to applicants  
Add diverse practicum and internship placements | | | |
| Course Content:  
Divide ECD 434 into two courses  
Need more content on child guidance; Need content on role of nature and environments for children | Student feedback, UIC observations  
Meeting with mentor teachers | Discussion with faculty; Submission through college/university curriculum committees (3) | Proposal to divide course content for ECE 434 into two courses. Proposed new ECE 497 Guidance course. |
| Preschool Internship  
Modify “level of teaching” expectations | | | Expectations for students as “Co-teaching” (as transition to internship in primary) |
| Teacher Work Sample Requirement-  
Change requirement to Primary internship  
Primary Internship-Change to 2 terms | Pending State Requirement; Faculty pilot of 3 terms preschool internship  
Pending State Requirement (see above) | Faculty discussion; Chair discussion  
Faculty discussion; Chair discussion | Move requirement to Primary internship (pending)  
Two term requirement for primary internship-first term TWS requirement (pending) |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refining Course Content</td>
<td>Performance in preschool internship; Mentor teacher input; Update practices</td>
<td>Faculty discussion monthly meetings; Discussion mentor teacher meetings</td>
<td>Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment will be taught in Preschool Practicum</td>
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<td>Add more child assessment methods</td>
<td>Student performance in preschool internship;</td>
<td>Faculty discussion monthly meetings</td>
<td>Faculty to create “thread” that is embedded across program; Consider ECE 380 modifications with new instructor</td>
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<td>More content for English Language Learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Program assessment data</td>
<td>Faculty discussion monthly meetings</td>
<td>Linking infant/toddler with Preschool-transition of learning processes/milestone review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infant/Toddler Practicum-Preschool Practicum</td>
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<td>Linking assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refining requirements, content</td>
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<td>Emphasis in Infant/Toddler in Social-emotional development</td>
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<td>Preschool emphasis in cognition and language</td>
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