Central Washington University
Assessment of Student Learning
Department and Program Report

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report:  2010-2011   College:  Education & Prof. Studies
Department:                        TEACH   Program:    Early Childhood Education

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?

The Early Childhood Education Program is a standards based assessment program that aligns each course in the major and minor with specific standards as established by the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC) and the Washington State Teacher Endorsement requirements established by the Professional Educator's Standards Board (PESB). The 9 standards are articulated in a global format below (in detail in the attached document) by course, as well as outlined in course syllabi, defining standards for which students will be held accountable. The 9 standards are:

1.0 DEVELOPMENT: The competent early childhood teacher understands and applies the concepts of how individuals grow, develop and learn, and provides learning opportunities that support the intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of all children from birth through grade three.

2.0 CURRICULUM: The competent early childhood teacher promotes children’s cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and linguistic development by organizing and orchestrating the environment in ways that best facilitate the development and learning in the whole child.

3.0 ASSESSMENT: The competent early childhood teacher uses a variety of assessment practices collaboratively with colleagues and families to guide the learning and holistic development of young children.

4.0 CULTURAL: The competent early childhood teacher understands how children and families differ in their perspectives and approaches to learning and creates opportunities that are culturally responsive for children from birth through grades three.

5.0 FACILITATION OF LEARNING: The competent early childhood teacher designs and implements developmentally appropriate learning experiences that integrate within and across the discipline, and use effective instructional strategies.

6.0 FAMILY: The competent early childhood teacher knows and understands the importance of relationships with family and community and is able to create and maintain those relationships to support children’s learning and development.

7.0 PROFESSIONALISM: The competent early childhood teacher knows and understands the relationship of professionalism with practice, and demonstrates professionalism with practice, and demonstrates professionalism in practice, communication, philosophy, and documentation.

8.0 SELF-REFLECTION: The competent early childhood teacher, in collaboration with colleagues, regularly analyzes, evaluates, and synthesizes his/her teaching practices to make appropriate changes that more fully serve infants and young children.

9.0 CONTENT AREA APPLICATION: Candidates understand and apply knowledge of the arts, English language arts, health-fitness, mathematics, science, and social studies.
Throughout the 2010-2011 academic year all of the above standards were emphasized through coursework and assessment. The standards listed above were newly implemented during the 2007-2008 academic year with a complete realignment of courses to address the expanded 2007 standards. Since then special emphasis has been placed on the integration of standard 9: Content Area Application since the current ECE program did not adequately address these student-learning outcomes (shown in the Standards by Course Matrix 2008). The Early Childhood Education program has long embraced a Constructivist philosophy, and as such, the program has historically been designed around child development and appropriate practice. A whole-child and whole-learning approach which makes segmentation of the content areas difficult to define. The TEACH department also houses an elementary education program which still embraces a Constructivist approach, with the main emphasis of the program being content area methods development and delivery. To address standard The 2009-2010 academic year was the first full academic year the new benchmarks and standards were in place so no priority was given to any particular standard. The 2009-2010 academic year being the first year of the full implementation of the new standards required a consistency and was the major justification for not introducing any new courses or program changes. It is hard to assess the effectiveness of a program when too many elements are being actively manipulated.

2. How were they assessed?

The Early Childhood Education Program is firmly embedded in the constructivist philosophy of education that states that knowledge is constructed by the individual as an internal process and not by the direct instruction of a teacher. Given this philosophical base, the assessment within the ECE program has multiple facets and divergent products. The initial assessments as students enter the program are more traditional paper and pencil activities but as the students move through the program the assessments become more performance based where they are demonstrating competencies and skills. This transition takes place over the students’ junior and senior years and culminates in very open ended assessment activities that are demonstrations of skills that are integrated from the standards noted above.

The transition from traditional to constructivist assessments during the students’ progression through the program incorporates assessment as four levels.

A. **Classroom Assessment:** Each student is assessed by individual instructors as they move through the sequence of courses that lead to the major, minor, and/or endorsement. These classroom assessments progressively move from paper and pencil assignments to performance based tasks. The typical transition for the classroom based assessment goes from: multiple choice exams, essay exams, research reports, research methods & application of skills, reflective journals and/or application papers, case studies, curriculum development w/ classroom application, model teaching w/ performance assessment, and finally field experience assessments while working with age appropriate students. Some of the courses that have a high degree of individuality, such as the EDEC 477 Curriculum Exploration and EDEC 498 Issues in Early Childhood Education, the assessment will vary depending on the specific content of the course and the activities that the individual students are engage in during the quarter. The
classroom assessments by course are included in a table at the end of Question 2 section.

B. **Program Assessment:** All students in the Early Childhood Program that are seeking a Washington State Teaching endorsement are required to post 1-5 artifacts for each of the nine standards (noted in section 1) into the LiveText Portfolio assessment system. These artifacts are student selected pieces of work that could include but are not limited to, written papers, reflections, research conducted, case studies, video capturing candidates’ working with young children, lesson plans, letters from supervisors, etc. that support each student’s competency in each of the nine standards. These documents are reviewed and rated (0 – 3 scale) by the Early Childhood Education Program’s faculty throughout the program on a quarterly basis as part of each term’s assessment process. The data collected from the LiveText documents are summarized by standard for each quarter and year.

C. **Professional Portfolio:** All Early Childhood Education majors as part of their senior practicum are to compile a professional portfolio that includes a variety of professional documents (see sample list below) that are reviewed by ECE faculty as well as outside evaluators when possible. Feedback about the student’s strengths and weaknesses are shared with them prior to their leaving the senior practicum the quarter before the students are scheduled for student teaching. (see attached Portfolio Review document)

**Professional Portfolio Documentation**

a. Educational Philosophy/Beliefs/Orientation/etc. (1 page or less)

b. Professional Goals Statement, Personal Information you want to share.

c. Resume (2 pages max.)

d. Transcripts

e. Classroom Management Plan
   i. Procedures
   ii. Classroom Ethics (Expectations)
   iii. Ideal Classroom Floor plan.
   iv. Discipline
   v. Grading Plan/Philosophy

f. Samples of Parent Newsletter.

g. Forms you have devised for use in your classroom.

h. Sample Lesson Plans for Content Areas (math, science, reading, language arts, etc.)
   i. Unit Plan (3-10 day theme plan with assessment instrument/rubric/etc.)

j. Photos of classroom projects that you have constructed (children in photos are a plus but be careful to have permission to use the photos.)

k. List of professional books that have highly influenced you. Write a brief annotation of what from the book made a difference in the way you operate the classroom, see the learner, etc.

l. List of favorite children’s books to use in the classroom. Write a brief annotation of how you would or have used these books in the classroom.

m. Complete chronology of your educational experiences (Vitae):
   i. School & Training
   ii. Certification
iii. Paid Experience
iv. Volunteer Experience
v. Workshops/Conferences Conducted
vi. Workshops/Conferences Attended
vii. Other training (reading series, math series, Red Cross, etc.)
n. Memberships to Professional Organizations (years)
o. Awards and Certificates of Recognition
p. References and Contacts (name, address, phone, & email)
q. Edited videotape/CD/DVD of you teaching a lesson. (Optional)
r. Other- as specified by supervisor

D. **WEST-E Examination:** All Early Childhood Education candidates must pass the end of program assessment proficiency examination before obtaining a teaching endorsement. The candidates can take this examination after completing a minimum of 75% of his/her program. The WEST-E examination domain of items is derived from the same nine standards that the Early Childhood Education Program’s classes are aligned and noted in section 1. The pass rate for the 80 candidates from the ECE Programs that took the WEST-E in Early Childhood Education during the 2009 – 2010 academic year was 70%. This is a drop from the 93% pass rate that was obtained during the 2008-2009 academic year that was based on the 2003 pedagogy driven standards and the Praxis II exit exam.

E. The candidate must also successfully complete a student teaching experience meeting all the requirements of the Performance Proficiency Assessment (PPA) prior to certification. This assessment instrument is conducted during the candidate’s student teaching by a faculty member that may but typically does not have any legacy history with the student’s academic instruction. So, the PPA typically provides a fresh view of the candidate’s skills and abilities.
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<th>Course</th>
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<th>Essay Exams</th>
<th>Research Reports</th>
<th>Skills Application</th>
<th>Reflections</th>
<th>Case Studies</th>
<th>Curriculum Dev.</th>
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3. **What was learned?**

The classroom assessment data was collected formally within each class but more informally across classes. In discussions with faculty the common threads that came to light were:

1. Many students are entering the major lacking writing skills. Many students are struggling with grammar and composition skills.
2. There is a trend for students to take too heavy a course load in an effort to complete their degree in as few quarters as possible. Given the outside demands that are competing for the students’ study time the degree of preparedness has significantly dropped over the last year. The “hurry to finish” mentality is causing students to enter courses in the sequence without having the depth of knowledge that is expected of students that are in the middle to end of the program.
3. The other discussion regarding the standards and proficiency centered around the fact that even though the EDEC 333 & EDEC 334 curriculum classes are now both required in both the major and minor, students are still not getting the depth of content in language arts, math, science, social studies, etc.

The program review of the LiveText data for the past year yielded some interesting findings also. In reviewing the summary data it appears that:

1. Some faculty members have failed to assess the LiveText data as data for some classes are absent from the end of year review data.
2. The ratings of faculty on the three-point scale may not discriminate sufficiently. On average, for the classes that had assessment data available, the number of 3– Exceptionally Addresses the Standard & 2 –Adequately Addresses the Standard, rating indicate that 87% of the students are meeting competency. This is approximately 17% more than were actually able to pass the WEST-E Exam which indicates that there is a mismatch somewhere in the assessment process.
3. The Professional Portfolio reviews conducted during the senior practicum for the Early Childhood Education majors indicated that while the students were generally competent in the nine standards they were not aware of the conventions for constructing job search documents and navigation of the educational employment process. The program focus has been on the students being professional in their behavior while in the classroom and among peer educators which may need to be expanded to include more professional information, training, and activities in the bigger picture of what professionalism means in education.
4. LiveText data between the on-campus students and off-campus cohorts indicates that the cohort in Des Moines scores at a higher level on the 3 point scale than do the campus based students but the pass rate of the WEST-E is approximately the same.

Obviously from the lower than expected pass rate for the WEST-E examination the ECE program’s alignment with the NAEYC and Washington State standards did not produce the higher anticipated results. The WEST-E being a new assessment appears to have a high emphasis on primary knowledge in individual content areas (math, science,
language arts, etc.) with much less emphasis on learning and pedagogy. While the data collected internally does not show a weakness in Standard 5 & Standard 9 the external assessment of the WEST-E highlight these as weaknesses.

The other thing that has been learned from the 2009-2010 data collection process is that the use of the electronic data collection program, LiveText, takes a lot of additional time on the part of the individual instructors. Since quite often there is only one or two faculty members teaching any particular course at a delivery site, the same data and probably richer data could be generated through other less time consuming measures.

4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?

The Early Childhood Department will meet in the fall of 2010 – 2011 to review these findings and begin a plan of action to address weaknesses and further build upon the strengths. There is no action plan in place as of the filing of the current report (please see item 5 for further details).

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?

In responding to this item there is a much bigger historical picture that needs to be understood. So, with some latitude in addressing the question we will need to briefly review the past few years. The on-campus ECE Division of the new TEACH Department has been operating with a faculty shortage for nearly 8 years. The on-campus ECE program had 32 majors & minors in 2000 with 1.25 faculty members dedicated to the program. In the 2007-2008 academic year the ECE program had 189 majors and minors and was operating with 2.25 faculty members (0.5 FTTT & 3 part-time adjuncts). The on-campus program was able to hire 2 new faculty members in 2008-2009 academic year but immediately lost one due to factors beyond the department’s control. Since that time the on-campus program has grown to over 200 majors and minors and started a second off-campus cohort in Yakima that is addressing the needs of the early childcare workers that are seeking a BA degree without teacher certification. Additionally the split of the Teacher Education Programs into four distinct departments (TEACH – Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, & Middle School Education; LLSE – Literacy, Bilingual & Teaching English as a Second Language, & Special Education; EFP- Educational Foundation Programs; & Advanced Studies Departments) The TEACH department on-campus consists of 5 faculty members that have been made responsible for all academic advising for the two largest programs in education; Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. The new EFP Department under Dr. Barry Donahue’s guidance has refused to do student advising regarding the Professional Sequence courses that lead to teacher certification. So, during the 2009-2010 academic year the 5 on campus faculty members of the TEACH department spent an average of 15.4 hours a week doing advising for the 596 Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and Middle Level Math & Science majors and minors. The ECE program was able to hire an additional faculty member for the 2010 2011 academic year but the TEACH program will be losing a faculty member (current chair) due to retirement in December of 2010. So, the new faculty member will represent a zero gain to the TEACH Department in reality. Dean Lambert has been
aware of the advising burden on the TEACH faculty since the split of the Teacher Education Programs into the four departments but has taken little to no action to address the inequities. A complaint with the United Faculty will be filled in the fall of 2010 if a plan for the reallocation of the advising load is not forthcoming. So, in summary the majority of the Early Childhood Education Departments efforts for the on-campus faculty (1.5 FTTT, 3 adjuncts) has been to advise students, teach classes, and to meet the increasing number of field supervision placements that the growth of the program has generated.

Now to more directly answer the question of what was done in the 2009-2010 year to address the assessment data from the 2008-2009 year. The new ECE standards came out in 2007 and during the summer of 2008 the ECE faculty went through the newly expanded standards and completed a course alignment. The resulting course alignment included the addition of two new courses being developed and added to the elective options and a program change to require both the EDEC 333 & EDEC 334 curriculum courses for the major and minor. The standards and objectives alignment was then applied to each course for review and development of the classroom assessments by the individual instructors across the program during the 2008 – 2009 school year. During the same year the exit exam for the teacher education candidates (WEST-E) was changed by Washington State to represent the new 2007 standards with the first administration scheduled for the fall of 2009. During the 2009-2010 no program changes were made but some of the classroom assessments were revised to better represent the intent of the standards and the EDEC 292 & EDEC 493 Field Experiences were revised to focus more on the subject content areas (reading, math, science, etc.) while keeping the methods and constructivist pedagogy elements in place. The ECE Program also went to an electronic collection system for field experience hours using the Civic Engagement Center’s services. This allows for the students to have a summary transcript of all of their individual classroom and volunteer experiences upon the completion of each quarter and at graduation. There were very few changes made during the 2009 – 2010 academic year as it was necessary to collect data on the changes that had been made in the curriculum alignment, course assessments, and how students achievement in regards to the new WEST-E examination before launching additional changes that might confound the data.

The Early Childhood Education faculty anticipate a revisiting of the alignment and additional program changes to be made over the next year in response to the findings of the 2009 -2010 academic year's data. However, much of this is dependent on staffing and the academic advising demands of the on-campus program as the faculty is committed to reducing the work week to a 45 hour limit for the 2010 – 2011 academic year (down from an average of 68 hours a week for 2009 -2010).

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:

Data on student assessment is collected at the department, college and university level but are entered into multiple systems. It would make more sense for the university to develop one assessment system that the data can be pulled from for
all levels of reporting instead of having to recreate different reports from the same data in different formats throughout the year.