Learning Outcomes

During the 2011-2012 School Year, the Early Childhood and Early Childhood Education Program revised its learning outcomes and assessment tools based on standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Utah State Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education. Students majoring in Early Childhood (EC) and Early Childhood Education (ECE) are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes:
1. Create and maintain a positive classroom environment;
2. Plan curriculum and design instruction to enhance children’s learning;
3. Engage and support all children in learning;
4. Assess and evaluate children’s learning;
5. Demonstrate professionalism to support children’s learning.

Method of Measurement and Thresholds for Acceptable Performance

A total of five measures were implemented to assess learning outcomes of EC/ECE students in 2011-2012 School Year. These measures were designed to help document the progress of EC and ECE majors, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program’s curriculum. The measures are also part of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) accreditation due in 2013.

1. Student Capstone Exam

The Student Capstone Exam consists of 6 essay questions. This exam has been used since 2000. In 2010 the questions were aligned with the Utah State Early Childhood Core Curriculum. This comprehensive essay examination is given at the end of the semester to students registered in the Early Childhood Senior Seminar (CHFAM 4990A), which is a capstone course for EC and ECE majors. Students need to score a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in order to pass this test.

The Capstone Exam questions assess the students’ ability to describe, in written form, their understanding of pertinent early childhood principles and practices. These include the goals, theories, and strategies of guidance; guidelines for constructing developmentally appropriate curriculum that includes an anti-bias strand relative to elements of diversity; using components of various developmental and learning theories for planning and evaluating instruction; describing the purpose of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and its major principles; explaining the process for deciding when a child’s behavior required outside consultation and/or referral; and describing an effective family involvement program in the school using the Epstein model.

To increase inter-rater reliability of the Capstone Exam, two EC faculty members would grade each student’s answers. The two grades are then calculated to obtain an average as the
final grade. When there is a big inconsistency between the two grades, a third faculty member
will be asked to read the exam.

2. Student Teaching Evaluation

The Student Teaching Evaluation Rating Scale has been used since 2004. This
assessment tool reflects both the NAEYC and Utah State Core Early Childhood Education
criteria. The professional lead teacher in the Melba Lehner Children’s School administers this
assessment based on the student teacher’s performance in the classroom. The questions are
clustered into 5 areas that match the program learning outcomes: Guidance, Planning, Family,
Teamwork, and Personal. The scale uses a 3-point rating criteria: Exceeds Criteria = 3, Meets
Criteria = 2, Doesn’t Meet Criteria = 1. A minimum score of 2 is required for passing.

3. Teacher Work Sample

Each student teacher in the Children’s School submits Work Samples (TWS) that
correspond to six rubrics (see example below). The TWS particularly addresses the students’
ability to meet NAEYC’s Standard 4c, understanding content knowledge in early education, and
4d, building meaningful curriculum.

1) Contextual Factors: The teacher uses information about the learning-teaching context and
student individual differences to set learning objectives and plan instruction and assessment.
2) Objectives/Intended Learning Outcomes: The teacher sets a measurable objective based on
the Children’s Schools goals.
3) Assessment Plan: The teacher uses assessment tools aligned with the objective to assess
student learning before, during, and after instruction.
4) Design for Instruction & Instructional Decision-Making: The teacher designs instruction
from assessments, taking into account students’ needs and interests. The teacher uses ongoing
analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.
5) Analysis of Student (Child) Learning: The teacher uses assessment data to profile student
learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.
6) Reflection and Self-Evaluation: The teacher reflects on his or her instruction and student
learning in order to improve teaching practice.

The Teacher Work Samples are based on the educational activities the students had
implemented during their student teaching. The instructor for the Advanced Planning and
Guidance course (CHFAM 4710) reviews the Work Samples and rates them on a 3-point scale:
Exceeds Criteria (3), Meets Criteria (2), and Doesn’t Meet Criteria. The Advanced Planning
and Guidance course (CHFAM 4710) is taken by the student teacher concurrently with student
teaching. The candidate Work Samples need to contain items that relate to the six rubrics.

4. Final Student Portfolio

The Final Student Portfolio contains artifacts that reflect the students’ learning from their
combined early childhood courses with an emphasis on their student teaching. This portfolio
contains information that demonstrates the student’s competencies in the six NAEYC
professional standards: 1) Promoting Child Development and Learning, 2) Building Family and
Community Relationships, 3) Observing, Documenting and Assessing, 4) Using Developmentally
Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families, 5) Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum, and 6) Becoming a Professional.

The instructor for the Advanced Planning and Guidance course (CHFAM 4710) reviews the student’s portfolio and rates them on a 3-point scale: Exceeds Criteria (3), Meets Criteria (2), and Doesn’t Meet Criteria. The Advanced Planning and Guidance course (CHFAM 4710) is taken by the student teacher concurrently with student teaching.

5. Follow-Up Evaluation for EC/ECE Graduates

The Follow-up Evaluation for ECE/EC Graduates was developed in 2011 as an additional assessment tool to measure the long-term effectiveness of the program based on the NAEYC and Utah State Core Early Childhood Education criteria. The Follow-up Evaluation contains 41 five-point Likert scale questions and 4 open-ended questions. The Likert scale questions examine the same five criteria assessed in the Student Teacher Evaluation: 1) Create and maintain a positive classroom environment; 2) Plan curriculum and design instruction to enhance children’s learning; 3) Engage and support all children in learning; 4) Assess and evaluate children’s learning; and 5) Demonstrate professionalism to support children’s learning. Respondents who graduated from the EC/ECE Program are asked to complete this evaluation by rating each question from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) based on “I learned about this when I was a student in the program” and “This is something useful to me now in my profession.”

Results of Assessment and Interpretations of Findings

The results from these five assessments indicate that the program continues to provide an educational arena that encourages ethical instructors who plan open ended, developmentally appropriate activities that support both NAEYC and the Utah State Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education. The following is a synopsis of the results and interpretations of findings.

1. Student Capstone Exam

Fall 2011 exam scores were unavailable. Students registered in Spring 2012 all scored above 80% to pass this test. Table 2 indicates the average scores that students received on each question of the comprehensive exam for Spring 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Mean Scores of the Capstone Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Students (N=16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Environment</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAP Curriculum</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism &amp; Ethics</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Student Learning, Laws</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Student Learning, Parents</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 1 indicates, the overall average of the 16 students in Spring 2012 was 91.5%, which is over the 80% cutoff criteria. Each major also received scores above the 80% level, with 91% for EC majors and 93% for ECE majors.

**Interpretations:** Sixteen students met, or exceeded, the minimum 80% on the capstone exam. The highest areas were in both designing a developmentally appropriate classroom environment (93%), and supporting student learning through an understanding of pertinent education laws (94%). The lowest percent was a question designed to assess strategies for assessment, planning, and evaluation of their curriculum based on theory. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the students still scored an average of 90%.

2. **Student Teaching Evaluation**

Results of student teacher evaluation in Fall 2010 are unavailable. In Spring 2012, seventeen student teachers were evaluated but four evaluations were misplaced, leaving a final sample of 13 students. The overall mean score of the 13 student teachers was 5.01, on a 6-point rating scale. The mean for ECE majors was 5.07, and EC majors 4.88. These scores indicate that the student teachers met all of the criteria. Table 2 shows the averages for each of the five areas.

![Table 2](Results of Student Teaching Evaluation in Spring 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Mean Scores of Student Teaching Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Students (N=13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom environment</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum planning</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support children learning</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>5.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>5.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of the mean scores for each of the five criteria demonstrates that the students received a fairly high score (about 5 out 6 points). The area that received the overall highest average was “Assess and evaluate children’s learning” (5.06), followed by “Demonstrate professionalism to support children’s learning” (5.04) and “Create and maintain a positive classroom environment” (5.03). The area with the lowest average score was “Engage and support all children in learning” (4.93). EC majors scored slightly lower than ECE students across all criteria being assessed.

**Interpretations:** In summary, the 13 student teachers that were evaluated in Spring 2012 met all the five criteria equivalent to learning outcomes of EC/ECE Program. This data appears to support the department’s instructional programs as it pertains to guidance, developmental planning, respecting and supporting families, cooperative and collaborative teamwork, and ethical and considerate teaching practices. Additionally, this information indicates that the student teachers go beyond minimal requirements and/or are consistently prepared ahead of time, which is a strong complement to the EC and ECE majors. Information on assisting students in developing strategies for reflecting on their teaching and personal traits may need to be strengthened in courses.
3. Teacher Work Sample

Information on Teacher Work Samples in Fall 2011 was unavailable. In Spring 2012, except for two students who received “Incomplete”, all 16 students taking CHF 4710 were able to exceed or meet criteria for their TWS. Table 3 lists the mean TWS scores of the 16 students. A score of 2 or higher reflects meeting or exceeding the criteria.

Table 3

Results of Teacher Work Samples in Spring 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubrics</th>
<th>Mean Scores of TWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Students (N=16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives/Intended Outcomes</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Plan</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design for Instruction and Instructional Decision-Making</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Student learning</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Self Evaluation</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 2, the average scores for all 16 teachers resulted in an overall “Meets Criteria” (mean=2.38). Additionally, the overall scores of both EC and Early Childhood Education were “Meets Criteria”, 2.41 and 2.38, respectively.

**Interpretations:** An examination of each area by majors reveals that the ECE majors scored lowest on “Reflection and Self Evaluation”, 2.11. This is consistent with the findings from the Student Teacher Evaluations listed in Table 1. Again, it supports the suggestion that course work on assisting students in self-reflection may need to be enhanced.

4. Final Student Portfolio

Results of the Final Student Portfolios in Fall 2011 were unavailable. In Spring 2012, seventeen Final Student Portfolios were submitted. Two students were rated “Exceeds Criteria” and 15 received the rating “Meets Criteria.” The average rating for all student portfolios was 2.12, out of a possible 3 points. The average for EC majors was 2, and ECE was 2.14. These scores demonstrate that all 17 students either met or exceeded the six rating criteria for the Final Student Portfolio.

**Interpretations:** As evidenced by the above information, EC and ECE students were able to maintain evidence that support their application of early childhood education principles and practices. The Student Portfolio results, however, did not include information by individual artifacts. There was no way of comparing student performance in different assessment areas.

5. Follow-Up Evaluation for EC/ECE Graduates

In April 2012, 21 Follow-Up Evaluation forms were mailed to students graduating in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 with a major in EC or ECE. One third of the graduates (N=7) returned the completed evaluation forms by May 4, 2012. As shown in Table 4 below, the average ratings for questions on all five criteria were between 4 and 5 points. Ratings regarding questions on “This
is something useful to me now in my profession” were slightly lower than those on “I learned about this when I was a student in the program.” Their response to the open

**Interpretations:** Students graduating from the EC/ECE Program seemed to agree that they were adequately trained on early childhood education principles and practices. Timing of administering the evaluation might be an issue, particularly for the validity of questions on “This is something useful to me now in my profession.” The seven students who participated in the evaluation were recent graduates and therefore did not have much professional experience to decide on the usefulness of what they learned in the program.

### Table 4
**Results of the Follow-up Evaluation in Spring 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>All (N=7)</th>
<th>EC (N=4)</th>
<th>ECE (N=3)</th>
<th>All (N=7)</th>
<th>EC (N=4)</th>
<th>ECE (N=3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom environment</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum planning</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support children learning</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment &amp; evaluation</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course of Action to Be Taken**

The results from these assessments indicate that the program continues to provide an educational arena that encourages ethical instructors who plan open ended, developmentally appropriate activities that support creativity and the development of the whole child. The information gleaned from these assessment tools suggests the department’s curriculum is effective in teaching students how to implement instructional programs as they pertain to guidance, developmental planning, respecting and supporting families, cooperative and collaborative teamwork, and ethical and considerate teaching practices. Additionally, this information indicates that the student teachers go beyond the minimal requirements and are consistently prepared for teaching, which is a strong complement to the EC and ECE majors.

Furthermore, all five assessments are based on the NAEYC standards, with a number of them corresponding to the Utah State Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education. The results from these assessments demonstrate students majoring in Early Childhood and Early Childhood Education, and have completed their early childhood student teaching, meet the NAEYC standards for Promoting Child Development and Learning; Building Family and
Community Relationships; Observing, Documenting and Assessing; Teaching and Learning; and Becoming a Professional.

One area that the EC/ECE Program will consider is incorporating additional course work on assisting students in self-reflection. This suggestion stems from both the Student Teaching Evaluation and Teacher Work Sample.

Another area for future improvement is to revise the assessment tools. Each measure needs to align more closely with the learning outcomes of the EC/ECE Program. The format and content of some measures needs to be reexamined for easier implementation and data analysis. For example, learning outcomes measured in the Student Teaching and Follow-Up Evaluations are inconsistent with the other three assessment tools. Each assessment adopts a different rating system: 100-point, 6-point, 5-point, or 3 point. A rationale needs to be provided for the inconsistencies in the rating scales. Wording is also a big issue. Some items in the assessment are misleading or confusing to read.

Finally, due to misplacement and other reasons, this program report is missing assessment results collected in Fall 2011 and some data from Spring 2012. A better way of coordinating outcome assessments should be underway for future.