

The Masters of Arts in Education, Early Childhood Education Option at California State University, Fresno is a long established NAEYC-recognized program for the advanced preparation of early childhood educators and care providers. In addition to offering a Master's degree in Education, the ECE option offers to its credentialed candidates a preparation program leading to a California ECE Specialist Credential that may be earned with or without the Master's Degree.

Since the submission of the original 2013 report, the program has completed its transition from the 2007 NAEYC Standards to the 2010 Standards. As will be reflected in the current submission, this transition resulted in the realignment of courses and signature assessments to the standards and key elements as well as revisions of assessment rubrics to more accurately reflect the connection between the assessments and the standards/key elements.

Assessments (descriptions and rubrics provided)

1. ECE Culminating Activity: Exam, Project, Thesis, or Specialist Paper	Comprehensive essay exam or research paper	At end of program. Exam not embedded; Project (LEE298); Thesis (LEE299); Research Paper (LEE235: Concept Development in ECE; for ECE Specialist Credential-only candidates)
2. ECE Field Portfolio	Portfolio	LEE241: Fieldwork in ECE
3. DAP Charter School Project	Research paper, presentation	LEE233: Curriculum & Assessment in ECE
4. ECE Leadership Activity	Field study in ECE setting & presentation in the field	LEE250: Leadership in ECE
5. Action Research Project	Research project, paper, and presentation	CI285: Seminar in Advanced Educational Psychology
6. Dispositions and Ethics Assignment	Case study analysis and essay	LEE171: Trends and Issues in ECE

Assessments and NAEYC Standards

(For each Standard, indicate the following assessments) (see grid)

Standard 1— Assessments 1, 2, 5

Standard 2 —Assessments 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

Standard 3— Assessments 2, 3, 4, 5

Standard 4— Assessments 2, 3, 5, 6
Standard 5— Assessments 1, 2, 3
Standard 6— Assessments 2, 4, 5, 6

Findings, Recommendations, and Actions 2014-15

Overall Findings

Content Knowledge (Standards 1, 2, 5)

1. Analysis of candidates' performance on Assessments #1, 2, and 5 indicate Standard 1 (Promoting Child Development and Learning) to be a relative strength in the program. A large percentage of students consistently "exceed expectations" on this standard. Only one student "did not yet meet expectations" for Standard 1 (Key Element 1a: Knowing and understanding young children's characteristic and needs, from birth through age 8) on one assessment (Assessment #1).

2. Candidates demonstrated satisfactory performance in Standard 2 (Building Family and Community Relationships), although performance seems inconsistent. Most candidates scored at a "meets expectations" level on Key Element 2a: Knowing about and understanding diverse family and community characteristics (Assessment #1). However, candidate performance on Key Element 2b: Supporting and engaging families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships (Assessments #4, 6) was inconsistent. On Assessment #4, 5 out of 15 students scored at a "does not yet meet expectations" level but on Assessment #6, 13 out of 16 candidates "exceeded expectations" on this Key Element. Most candidates "exceeded expectations" on Assessments #2 and 3 for Key Element 2c: Demonstrating cultural competence and effective collaboration to involve families and communities in their children's development and learning. This inconsistency in scores over different Assessments seems to suggest that additional support for Standard 2 might be needed in LEE 250: Leadership in ECE, which is the course in which Assessment #4 is administered.

3. For Standard 5 (Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum), candidate performance on Assessments #1, 2, and 3 indicate that candidates are generally evenly split between scores of "meets expectations" and "exceeds expectations." There do not seem to be any major discrepancies in candidate performance on Standard 5 across these three Assessments.

Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge, Skill, and Dispositions (Standards 3, 4, 6)

1. Standard 3 (Observing, Documenting, & Assessing to Support Young Children and Families) is assessed by Assessments #2, 3, 4, and 5. Candidate scores seemed to be generally split evenly between "meets expectations" and "exceeds expectations," suggesting adequate program support on this Standard.

Candidate scores on Assessments #5 and 3 for Key Element 3a demonstrate adequate performance, with approximately even numbers of candidates scoring at “meets expectations” and “exceeds expectations” levels. Similarly, for Key Element 3b, on Assessment #3, approximately even numbers of candidates scored at “meets expectations” and “exceeds expectations” levels. For Key Element 3c, candidates were split between meeting and exceeding expectations on Assessment #2, although all 3 candidates “exceeded expectations” in Spring 2015. For Key Element 3d, candidates were also approximately evenly split between meeting and exceeding expectations, although one candidate did score at a “does not yet meet expectations” level on Assessment #4. Again, the data seem to suggest that additional support for Standard 3 might be needed in LEE 250: Leadership in ECE, which is the course in which Assessment #4 is administered.

2. Standard 4 (Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families) is assessed through Assessments #2, 3, 5, and 6. Overall, candidate data suggests that program support for Standard 4 is adequate, with candidates generally evenly split between scores of “meets expectations” and “exceeds expectations” for all Key Elements. Of note is that most candidates scored at an “exceeds expectations” level for Key Element 4a: Understanding positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundation of their work with young children (Assessment #6) and one candidate scored at a “does not yet meet expectations” level for Key Element 4d: Reflecting on their own practice to promote positive outcomes for each child (on Assessment #5). For Assessment #5, the score of “does not yet meet expectations” may indicate that more emphasis should be placed in the Action Research Project on reflective practice and explicitly connecting the implications of the action research to practice.

3. Standard 6 (Growing as a Professional) is assessed through Assessments #2, 4, 5, and 6. Overall, candidate data suggests that program support in Standard 6 is uneven, with candidates meeting or exceeding expectations for most of the Key Elements across most of the Assessments, but not yet meeting expectations on two Key Elements on Assessment #4. For Key Element 6a, most candidates performed at an “exceeds expectations” level on both Assessments #4 and #6, but one candidate did score at a “does not yet meet expectations” level on Assessment #4. For Key Element 6b: In-depth understanding and thoughtful application of NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and other professional guidelines relevant to their professional role, most candidates performed at an “exceeds expectations” level on Assessment #6, but most candidates performed at a “does not yet meet expectations” level on Assessment #4, suggesting that additional support for Standard 6 may be needed in LEE 250: Leadership in ECE, which is the course in which Assessment #4 is administered. Overall, most candidates scored at an “exceeds expectations” level for Key Element 6c, assessed by Assessments #2 and #5. Most candidates performed at a “meets expectations” level for Key Element 6d (Assessment #5) and for Key Element 6e (Assessment

#4). Most candidates scored at an “exceeds expectations” level for Key Element 6f (Assessment #6).

Student Learning (Assessment 5, Standards 1, 3, 4)

1. Student learning is emphasized in Standards 1 (Promoting Child Development & Learning), 3 (Observing, Documenting, & Assessing to Support Young Children and Families), and 4 (Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families), particularly in Assessments #2, 3, and 5. Candidate performance on Assessments #2 and 3 indicates most candidates perform at a “meets expectations” or “exceeds expectations” level on Key Elements 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4b, 4c, and 4d. Most candidates performed at an “exceeds expectations” level on Assessments #2 and 3 on Standard 1 (Key Elements 1a: Knowing and understanding young children’s characteristic and needs, from birth through age 8; 1b: Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on early development and learning; and 1c: Using developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging environments for young children). These data suggest that student learning, as measured by Standards 1, 3, and 4 is an area of relative strength for our candidates.

Recommendations

1. A priority exists to align coursework and fieldwork syllabi, assessments, rubrics, and data collection strategies with the 2010 NAEYC Standards, Key Elements for Advanced Preparation Programs. Embed direct measures of each Key Element within each Standard.
2. Continue to provide resources and advising to candidates regarding professional writing skills. Although assessment scores for Key Element 6f: Demonstrating a high level of oral, written, and technological communication skills with specialization for specific professional role(s) emphasized in the program, indicate that expectations are being met, faculty still believe written communication skills to be less than adequate for many candidates. Faculty will provide feedback to candidates relative to their communication skills on written assignments and will refer candidates to the Graduate Writing Center for tutoring as soon as they are aware that candidates’ writing skills do not meet graduate-level standards within the classroom. Additionally, more emphasis can be given to writing skills through assignments using the Program’s writing rubric.
3. Collaborate with research faculty teaching ERE220, Research Methods, to provide carry-over assignments that strengthen Key Element 6c: Using professional resources, inquiry skills and research methods to engage in continuous, collaborative learning and investigation relevant to practice and professional role. Expose candidates to more research articles that can be discussed in-depth in class, and increase candidate opportunities to use evidence-based practices of measurement in classroom assignments.

4. Evaluate the course content and alignment of Assessment #4 with the LEE250: Leadership in ECE course. Data suggest that performance on Assessment #4 is a relative weakness for candidates in the program. Faculty may consider revising course content and/or examining the wording of Assessment #4 to more explicitly support candidates in their professional development vis-à-vis the Key Elements (2b, 3d, 6a, 6b, 6e) assessed by this Assessment.

Actions Taken

Over the past several years the Early Childhood Education Advanced Program has made changes to strengthen its content and fieldwork experiences. Despite faculty retirements and new hires, the program continues to attract early childhood educators from a variety of settings and backgrounds. The following are some of the data-driven changes made recently to the Program:

1. Project/Thesis advisors work more closely with candidates in ERE220, Research in Education, the semester before they register for a project or thesis to focus their skills in methodology and analysis of data (Key Elements 6c and 6d).
2. The Program works with University graduate administration to provide resources specifically designed to better develop graduate-level writing skills (Key Element 6f).
3. In spring, 2012, all four ECE core classes (LEE171, Trends and Issues in ECE; LEE232, Literacy in ECE; LEE233 Curriculum and Assessment in ECE; and LEE271, Diversity in ECE) were approved as required for the ECE Graduate Program. In the past, students were required to take 3 of the 4 core classes. This action better assures more uniform coverage of all Standards and Key Elements for all students in the Advanced Program.
4. A new class, LEE250: Leadership in ECE, was approved as a required core course. This course addresses strengthening Standard 6 (Growing as a Professional) and leadership- and advocacy-related Key Elements 6a, b, c, and e.
5. In compliance with school-level mandates, a Comprehensive Exam was developed by ECE faculty as an alternative to the Project and Thesis as a summative assessment of Program content mastery (Assessment #1). The Exam was developed to reflect the same level of rigor as the Project and Thesis. A rubric was developed to align with the quality descriptors associated with Standards 1 (Promoting Child Development and Learning), 2 (Building Family and Community Relationships), and 5 (Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum) as assessed by the Assessment #1 format options: Project and Thesis.

6. A system for data storage was developed by the Program Coordinator. This system allows faculty to independently enter assessment data for easy access to the entire Program's faculty when preparing reports or contemplating changes in the Program. In addition, the Program Coordinator created an online depository for faculty's updated syllabi, Assessments, and rubrics.

7. Assessment 6 and its rubric were revised to directly measure knowledge and application of NAEYC Code of Ethics as one assessment of Standard 6 (Growing as a Professional).

8. As part of the Response to Conditions review process, all Assessments #1-6 and associated rubrics were updated to disaggregate Key Elements and the alignment for courses and Assessments with the Key Elements across the Program was re-evaluated and revised.