

## **Masters of Arts in Education, Early Childhood Education Option**

Kremen School of Education and Human Development

### **STUDENT OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN (SOAP)**

#### **I. Mission Statement**

Empower Early Childhood Education teacher leaders and Early Childhood Education program leaders to positively affect children's and families' lives and learning. To that end, the ECE advanced programs aims to create leaders who are ethical, competent professionals who are current in the ECE field and are advocates for quality early childhood education.

#### **II. Goals and Student Learning Outcomes**

Goal A: ECE graduates utilize theory, research, and ongoing assessment when making instructional decisions.

Objective A-1. Demonstrate knowledge, skills and dispositions that promote development and learning.

Objective A-2. Apply current ECE research to issues of practice.

Objective A-3. Utilize a variety of inquiry methods and the latest technology.

Goal B: ECE graduates are caring and ethical teacher-leaders, guided by their knowledge of culturally and developmentally appropriate practices.

Objective B-1. Engage in reflection, documentation, self-assessment and life-long learning.

Goal C: ECE graduates are leaders who address the needs of their culturally diverse learners respectfully and responsively.

Objective C-1. Integrate various perspectives to create quality early education for all children.

Objective C-2. Be responsive to ethnical, cultural and linguistic diversity.

Goal D: Develop interprofessional skills necessary to become ECE leaders in both the educational community and in the community at large.

Objective D-1. Build strong relationships with families and communities.

Objective D-2. Advocate for children, families, and the profession.

### III. Curriculum Map

The following table provides information regarding objective/coursework alignment for the Master's in Education, Early Childhood Education Option.

I = Introduced    R = Reinforced    E = Emphasized    M = Mastered

	<b>Obj. A-1</b>	<b>Obj. A-2</b>	<b>Obj. A-3</b>	<b>Obj. B-1</b>	<b>Obj. C-1</b>	<b>Obj. C-2</b>	<b>Obj. D-1</b>	<b>Obj. D-2</b>
<b>LEE235</b>	E	E	R	E	R	E	E	R
<b>LEE241</b>	M	M	R	M	E	R	E	M
<b>LEE171</b>	I	R	R	E	R	E	E	I
<b>LEE232</b>	E	E	R	M	E	E	R	R
<b>LEE233</b>	M	E	E	M	E	E	R	R
<b>LEE271</b>	R	E	R	M	M	M	E	E
<b>ERF220</b>	R	M	M	E	R	R	R	M
<b>ERF285 OR ERF288</b>	R	M	M	M	E	E	E	M
<b>LEE298B OR LEE299</b>	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

LEE 235      Concept Development in ECE  
 LEE241      Field Work in ECE  
 LEE171      Trends and Issues in ECE  
 LEE232      Literacy in ECE  
 LEE233      Curriculum and Assessment in ECE  
 LEE271      Diversity and Inclusion in ECE  
 ERF220      Research in Education  
 ERF285      Seminar in Advanced Educational Psychology  
 or  
 ERF288      Educational Measurement and Program Evaluation  
 LEE298B      Project  
 or  
 LEE299      Thesis

#### IV. Assessment Methods

##### A. Direct Measures

1. Assessment of Content Knowledge Summative Assessment: Final Project, Thesis & Research Paper
2. Assessment of Content Knowledge: Portfolio Assessment
3. Assessment of Knowledge, Skills & Dispositions: Combined Charter School Assessment
4. Assessment of Knowledge, Skills & Dispositions: Leadership Activity Assessment
5. Assessment of Effects on Student Learning: Action Research Activity Assessment
6. Assessment of Knowledge, Skills & Dispositions: Professional Ethics Assessment

##### B. Indirect Measures

1. Graduate and Employer Survey

#### V. Student Learning Outcomes/Assessment Alignment

The following table provides information regarding objective/assessment alignment for the Master's in Education, Early Childhood Education option.

	Obj. A-1	Obj. A-2	Obj. A-3	Obj. B-1	Obj. C-1	Obj. C-2	Obj. D-1	Obj. D-2
<b>Assessment 1:</b> Project, Thesis, Research Paper	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Assessment 2:</b> Portfolio	X	X	X	X				
<b>Assessment 3:</b> Combined Charter School			X		X		X	
<b>Assessment 4:</b> Leadership Activity	X			X			X	
<b>Assessment 5:</b> Action Research Activity		X		X		X		X
<b>Assessment 6:</b> Professional Ethics	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

## **VI. Timeline for Implementation of Assessment Methods and Summary Evaluations**

The Early Childhood Education option has been fully implementing all six assessments annually since 2006 as called for in the 2006 NCATE Review. Scoring of the assessments is done each semester by faculty in whose course the assessment is embedded. Program faculty meets annually to analyze the results of the assessments and to make data-driven plans for program improvements relative to the program objectives.

## **VII. Closing the loop – Summary Evaluation, Curriculum Adjustment, and Reporting**

In 2001, the ECE Graduate Program submitted and had approved its “Standards-Based Outcomes Assessment Plan,” (SOAP) consisting of program standards, assessments, course matrices, and a timeline for administration.

In 2001-02, the ECE Graduate faculty began regular meetings to review and revise program standards and to construct a series of assessments aligned with the program’s goals and objectives that could be used both to measure student mastery and to provide evidence of program effectiveness. Collectively the assessments evaluate program outcomes multiple times using a variety of assessment strategies. Each of the six assessments is accompanied by a rubric that qualitatively differentiates performance at three levels.

In 2002-03 six assessments were field-tested and revisions were made as appropriate. During that year, the graduate faculty met as a whole and engaged in a systematic review and analysis of the student data from the final project and thesis assessment (Assessment #1), the first assessment to be revised to more clearly evaluate student’s mastery of specific program outcomes. The results of data analysis led to the following findings:

- a) Content Knowledge
  - Consistent evidence of mastery of content knowledge and research in ECE.
  - Analytic score results for final projects over the last five years revealed that “review of the literature” was at a high level, while the project activities in some cases were weak in the application of knowledge and research to ECE issues.
- b) Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions
  - Fieldwork was designed mainly for ECE teachers in classrooms. Other ECE field settings were not being utilized.
  - Many students were frustrated by the amount of paperwork and had to extend to another semester to complete work.
  - Because students were enrolled in the beginning, midpoint and end of the program, communication, purpose and leadership of fieldwork aspects were problematic.
  - ECE program did not have an emphasis on ethical dimensions of professional work.

- Many important areas of leadership were not addressed by students in the fieldwork or final project.
- c) Effects on Student Learning
- The fieldwork requirements and assignments lacked coherence and did not focus on advanced standards.
  - While professional knowledge, skills and dispositions were covered in the program, there was a lack of multiple opportunities for students to repeatedly provide evidence of effects on student learning and to show growth in this area.

In 2003-04, many of 2002-2003 issues were addressed. The program was sequenced to place the fieldwork experience in the second year, right before the final project. The class was also strengthened with major advocacy and leadership assignments and with the embedding of the portfolio assessment (Assessment #2) and leadership activity (Assessment #4). Fieldwork was expanded to include ECE settings outside traditional classrooms — agencies, home-based services, private daycare, etc. These actions strengthened application issues, provided a sequence of courses, and heightened awareness of leadership activities in the field.

In 2004-05, the graduate faculty continued to address data-driven concerns of performance in the areas of inclusion of professional ethics and the assessment of professional dispositions; strengthening candidates' focus on student learning in theory-to-practice assignments; and experimenting with an advisory program that would connect fieldwork to the final project through a common faculty mentor that encouraged a more collegial faculty-student culture.

Several events in 2004-05 caused program faculty to believe that the use of outcome-based assessment and resulting data were, in fact, having a positive effect on program quality:

- Two student's final projects from 2004-2005 led to significant funding to support their implementation. One project, a culturally appropriate home visitation program for families with children under five, received a grant of \$4,000,000+ from *First Five of Fresno County* and is to be initiated in nine local school districts/agencies. Another project, a review of ECE program quality rating systems in 10 states is the basis for a \$1,000,000+ award to develop a Fresno County rating system.
- The DAP Charter School Project (Assessment #3) was expanded to require students to observe and make home visits in connection with the project. Motivated by this assessment, a former graduate student who created the project as a response to the assessment's mandate is now directing this significant intervention project and now a guest instructor for this assignment.
- To expand the role of graduates, the *Fansler Faculty* (funded by the local Fansler Foundation) provide consultation to ECE programs in their areas of expertise. To be selected, graduates must also be willing to donate 10 hours of in-kind services.

- Each semester the ECE Program as a whole holds an ECE Leadership Convocation. An outstanding graduate is selected as the Fresno County Fansler ECE Leader. They give an inspiring presentation on an aspect of their leadership to a group including 75-100 ECE students—past, current, future and others and receive a small award.

In 2005-06, the ECE Graduate option was successful in their NCATE review. Assessments were judged to be valid and reliable and improvements had clearly been made based on data. During this year program faculty re-visited the final projects (Assessment #1) and noted that between 2002 and 2005 projects showed dramatic improvement in development and real-world implementation. Surprisingly, although the projects were more ambitious and complex, nearly all students completed their projects on time. They seemed much more inspired and interested because almost all projects were connected to their professional interests and settings. It was felt that this connection was influenced by the new role of fieldwork in the program and by its proximity in time to the final project. Project topics included:

- An innovative, culturally relevant home visitation service;
- A training program for interns in the college laboratory;
- A series of early literacy pamphlets for parents to be placed in pediatricians' offices;
- A framework for a preschool quality rating system in Fresno County; and
- Identification of barriers and strategies for obtaining NAEYC accreditation by private, for-profit ECE programs.

In 2006-07, the ECE graduate faculty focused attention on strengthening several of the assessments. The requirements for the Portfolio Project (Assessment #2) were made more specific and a more detailed rubric has been developed. More reflective analysis is required in theory-to-practice and an electronic presentation of portfolio materials is now required.

The Charter School Project (Assessment #3) was expanded to include all four of the LEE courses from which the graduate student selects three. In that way the project is complete no matter which of the four courses are selected. This required work over time and close collaboration among graduate faculty.

Future activities include an expanded marketing plan to bring more graduate students to the ECE Option in order to develop student cohorts; the development of an electronic data system for storing and analyzing data generated by the ECE assessments; re-visiting the validity of the assessments to make sure that as keystone course activities/assessments, the designated six ECE assessments continue to provoke best practice and current research in the field and continue to provide both candidate and program feedback and accountability.