**Annual Assessment Report for the 2020-2021 AY**

Reports completed on assessment activities carried out during the 2020-2021 AY will be due September 30th 2021 and must be e-mailed to the Director of Assessment, Dr. Douglas Fraleigh (douglasf@csufresno.edu).

Provide detailed responses for each of the following questions within this word document. Please do NOT insert an index or add formatting. For purposes of this report, you should only report on two or three student learning outcomes (department’s choice) even if your external accreditor requires you to evaluate four or more outcomes each year. Also be sure to explain or omit specialized or discipline-specific terms.

Department/Program: Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Degree: M.A. in Education, Curriculum and Instruction Option

Assessment Coordinator: Carol Fry Bohlin (Program Coordinator); Jessica Hannigan (Kremen School of Education and Human Development Assessment Coordinator)

1. Please list the learning outcomes you assessed this year.

Goal 1: CURRICULUM – Prepare curricular and instructional leaders with knowledge of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation.

Objective 1.2: Graduates will identify historical and contemporary issues that have implications for curricular selection and change, including, but not limited to, second language learners, developing a global perspective, state and national standards, and “workplace know-how.”

Goal 4: LEADERSHIP – Foster the skills and dispositions necessary to become educational leaders.

Objective 4.1: Graduates will communicate research-based arguments for educational issues, policies, or research design.

1. What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment? **Please describe the assignment and the criteria or rubric used to evaluate the assignment in detail and, if possible, include copies of the assignment and criteria/rubric at the end of this report.**

We were very pleased to be allowed to use the findings in this report from the assessment of a random sample of 10 projects and theses for the Advanced Disciplinary Knowledge/Skill Graduate Core Competency assignment due earlier this year for WASC, as we were planning such an evaluation for this 2020-21 assessment report. In addition to wanting to assess the final research and writing products, we wanted to continue monitoring the incoming students’ progress on the Graduate Writing Requirement assignment. This assignment is a direct assessment of our students’ ability to synthesize and communicate research-based knowledge in curriculum. This ability is essential for the development of educational leadership, which we expect to be more fully demonstrated within their master’s project or thesis, which in our program is the traditional five-chapter work that typically ranges from 40-80 pages in length and addresses an area of identified need within the student’s primary area of career focus or employment, whether it be as an athletic coach (we have 22 student-athletes/coaches in our 120-student program), mathematics teacher, librarian, fire fighter, medical doctor, musician, or any of the dozens of unique present or future career fields of our students.

(a) For the Graduate Writing Requirement, each student identifies a current issue of interest concerning curriculum or instruction, locates and reads related literature, and writes a scholarly paper 8-10 pages in length reviewing the literature and drawing conclusions about the issue. The student’s writing is assessed on the following:

- Comprehensibility

- Clear organization and presentation of ideas

- An ability to arrange ideas logically so as to establish a sound scholarly argument

- Thoroughness and competence in documentation

- An ability to express in writing a critical analysis of existing scholarly/professional literature in the student’s area of interest

- An ability to model the discipline’s overall style as reflected in representative journals

- Skilled usage of APA Style for formatting, reference citations, numerical representations, etc.

The criteria above are grouped into three primary categories: Style and Format, Mechanics, and Content and Organization. To pass the Graduate Writing Requirement, the student must earn an “Accomplished” rating (3 on a 4-point scale) in each of these categories. See the scoring rubric below for a description of each of the four levels within each of the three categories of analysis.

During 2020-21, the instructor used the rubric below to evaluate the papers. For those whose papers did not meet the standard within the three categories, she worked with the student to personally guide the development of their writing. Thus, the assignment was more formative in approach than summative, with student growth and ultimate success the goal.



(b) For the Advanced Disciplinary Knowledge/Skill measurement, three program faculty evaluated ten projects/theses from the 2020-21 AY using the criteria and rubric below:

**Advanced Disciplinary Knowledge/Skill Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | **Advanced proficiency (3)** | **Proficiency (2)** | **Partial Proficiency (1)** |
| **Knowledge** | Demonstrates advanced level of knowledge and additional details/aspects not required for proficiency are evident. | Demonstrates above-average level of knowledge consistent with graduate program level work. Sufficient details/aspects are included and clearly indicate proficiency. | Does not demonstrate adequate level of knowledge. Either details/aspects are missing or information/performance does not clearly demonstrate adequate level of mastery of the material.  |
| **Application of knowledge** By demonstrating ability to interpret evidence OR draw conclusions OR evaluate or diagnose patients OR develop/produce original artwork, choreography, or technological innovations or programs  | There is considerable evidence, beyond that required for proficiency, that the student has analyzed and interpreted information and drawn conclusions OR Student is able to apply their knowledge to think critically and evaluate patients and draw conclusions OR the student is able to apply their knowledge of certain artistic or engineering techniques to create artwork or structures | There is clear evidence that the student has analyzed and interpreted information and drawn conclusions OR Student is able to apply their knowledge to think critically and evaluate patients and draw conclusions OR the student is able to apply their knowledge of certain artistic or engineering techniques to create artwork or structures | Very little evidence that student is able to apply their knowledge |

1. What did you learn from your analysis of the data? Please include sample size (how many students were evaluated) and indicate how many students (number or percentage instead of a median or mean) were designated as proficient. Also indicate your benchmark (e.g. 80% of students will be designated as proficient or higher) and indicate the number of students who met that benchmark.

(a) Graduate Writing Requirement (GWR)

As described above, the instructor worked with all students so that proficiency was reached. She taught two sections of the course, the first in Fall 2020 with 28 students and the second in Summer 2021 with 21 students. The students in the fall course were primarily incoming M.A.Ed.-C&I students from a wide variety of backgrounds, while the students in the summer course were primarily students who had just completed a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential program in a large local school district (thus were newly-minted elementary school teachers).

The following is the instructor’s summary of the performance of the 28 students in her Fall 2021 course (CI 250 – Advanced Curriculum Theory and Analysis) using the same general descriptors for each set of students. All eventually passed the GWR, although most did so after identification of writing challenges and support from the instructor.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Graduate Writing Requirement Success** | **Fall 2020**(*n =* 28) | **Summer 2021**(*n =* 21; cohort) |
| No edits necessary; passed on first submission | 1 (3.6%) | 9 (42.9%) |
| Passed after correcting a few APA Style errors | 5 (17.9%) | 5 (23.8%) |
| Passed after submitting an initial draft for review and then editing based upon feedback from instructor | 16 (57.1%) | 4 (19.0%) |
| Passed after the third submission (content often excellent but challenges using APA Style) | 2 (7.1%) | 1 (4.8%) |
| Passed after three submissions with support from instructor with sentence/paragraph construction and argumentation (most of these students had English as a second language–Hmong and Arabic in summer; Spanish and Hmong in fall) | 4 (14.3%) | 2 (9.5%) |

As a side note, student comments about the summer course were quite positive and expressed appreciation for the instructor’s support of their academic writing.

(b) While we included the actual students’ names in the WASC report, we have given them pseudonyms here. See the chart below for our scores for knowledge and the application of that knowledge (based on the rubric), as well as comments about the projects/theses. Faculty rarely have the opportunity to read the projects or theses of their peers’ students; we found this to be an instructive activity. It also provided an opportunity to see what the overall strengths and growth areas were among our students with regard to their academic writing.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Student’s First and Last Name** | **Project or Thesis** | **Score for Knowledge** | **Score for Application of Knowledge** | **Comment Box** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Student A | Project | 3 | 2 | Solid theoretical foundation of research and structure of the project. Some formulations in the methods section and the data analysis indicate the potential for further clarification of student understanding of the research process (e.g., “the researcher will prove if the null hypothesis was rejected or accepted.”)  |
| Student B | Project | 2 | 2 | Very innovative and timely research with a focus on COVID. Great use of social media as a data collection tool. Some formulations in the methods section and the data analysis indicate the potential for further clarification of student understanding of the research process (e.g., “limited participants of 23 students”; since it is autoethnography, the participant is the author). |
| Student C | Project | 3 | 3 | Solid theoretical foundation of research. The description of the quantitative results indicates the appropriate application of statistical methods in knowledge application. |
| Student D | Project | 3 | 3 | Very innovative and timely research with a focus on COVID. Solid research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. |
| Student E | Project | 3 | 3 | Clearly presented, strong theoretical basis, appropriate statistical analyses, important focus on satisfaction of volunteers remotely mentoring autistic students in the Wayfinders program during the COVID-19 lockdown. |
| Student F | Project | 3 | 3 | Examined how makerspaces affected confidence and self-efficacy in creativity, science, and innovation. Strong knowledge base and research design and analysis (application). |
| Student G | Project | 2 | 1.5 | Project sought to answer questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on EL students’ reading proficiency. Although research questions were important and well thought-out, the writing and description of the results were relatively weak, and statistical analyses used for comparison of groups appeared inaccurate. |
| Student H | Thesis | 3 | 3 | Unique and important research on factors that affect the educational inclusion of LGBTQ secondary students. Strong use of triangulation of data for validity. Thorough analyses and discussion of implications. |
| Student I | Project | 2 | 2 | Survey research, with analyses of responses. Some confusion in interpreting teacher beliefs as actual results of social-emotional learning. |
| Student J | Project | 2 | 2 | The abstract description does not match the results chapter. In many cases it is difficult to understand what data were actually used in the analyses. Where explanations and examples were given, they did not seem reasonable to this reviewer. |

Overall, the following strengths were identified: Many of the students found ways to apply their acquired knowledge to very practical and timely topics. This year, the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of education were frequent topics of study. A number of the students are classroom teachers, and the projects allowed them to research “puzzles of practice,” thus knowledge application was generally strong among the projects/thesis we evaluated. In general (but certainly not in all cases), the research designs and data analyses were appropriately conceived and executed.

The following weaknesses (growth areas) were noted: While over half of the students had a strong understanding/grasp of research design and data analysis, these are still areas where growth is still needed for some of our students (and potentially faculty members as well). Consistent usage of current APA writing conventions and use of the project template could be improved.

1. What changes, if any, do you recommend based on the assessment data?

(a) It is clear that the writing of the summer class was stronger as a whole than the more eclectic fall class. The summer class consisted of credentialed teachers who had recently taken numerous post-baccalaureate credential courses, most of which involved writing, while the fall students were typically in their first semester of the graduate program and may not have been a student for many years. The students in the fall course also came from a wide variety of majors, including a number of student athletes for whom writing academic papers about curriculum/education topics using APA Style was a new experience. The instructor will continue providing structured support and guidance on papers both prior to and following formal submission. The instructor will add a separate review of writing mechanics for those students who require this, as well as recommend that students (especially those for whom English is not their primary language) seek assistance at the Graduate Writing Studio in the HML or via Zoom if needed.

(b) The Kremen School has just this week held a preliminary meeting among faculty interested in helping to resurrect the Center for Research and Publications. Identified goals include supporting students and faculty in research design and analysis, as well as taking research findings from projects/theses/dissertations to publication. The center is expected to develop over this year, which we think will help enhance a research culture among students in Kremen. Our department is putting more emphasis on submissions of quality IRBs toward the beginning of the project/thesis semester. This has been facilitated by the development of the university’s new online IRB proposal submission protocol, which prompts the PI (working with student Co-PIs) for various required elements for committee review. This (along with CITI certification) is very good experience for our students. Further, the C&I graduate faculty need to develop a rubric to guide project evaluation, in part to guide students (and faculty, especially newer graduate faculty) regarding project/thesis expectations. Although our project topics were timely and the research contributed to the literature base, quality was not consistent across all of those reviewed.

1. If you recommended any changes in your response to Question 4 in your 2018-19 assessment report, what progress have you made in implementing these changes? If you did not recommend making any changes in last year’s report please write N/A as your answer to this question.

We focused on the issue of the culminating exam in response to Question 4 in the 2018-19 assessment report, noting that the majority of the faculty thought that the comprehensive exam was an not the best culminating experience for our master’s program (see #7 below). We have since discontinued use of comps in our program.

1. What assessment activities will you be conducting during AY 2021-22?

We plan to continue monitoring the writing competency as assessed in the Graduate Writing Requirement assignment, as well as develop and conduct an alumni survey (long overdue). We would normally plan to evaluate the implementation of instruction (within a F2F classroom) assignment, but we are going to wait until COVID abates.

1. Identify and discuss any major issues identified during your last Program Review and in what ways these issues have or have not been addressed.

Our last program review did not identify any specific areas of improvement for our degree option, but we are still continuing to implement some of the plans we identified a decade ago. Some of these include continuing to support the students in the program via an updated webpage (new this year: https://kremen.fresnostate.edu/masters-education/curriculum-instruction), continue the Twitter feed (<https://twitter.com/Fresno_MAE_CI>), promote the new Certificate of Advanced Study in Research Methods, provide detailed advising “epistles” to all of the students in the program, cultivate international partnerships, increase the number of courses offered online or in a hybrid format (which we have quickly done in the past 1.5 years!), continuing to partner with local school districts to form graduate cohorts, and anticipate retirements and encourage new hires (we are currently searching for a research faculty member).

Further, the 2018-19 Assessment Report asked us to identify the Graduate Writing Requirement assignment, which we did above. We were also asked to be clearer regarding what happens to students who do not successfully complete the GWR the first time; that is noted above as well. We were asked to provide more information on the comprehensive exams, but we no longer include comps as a culminating experience option because the graduate faculty felt that writing a project or thesis was a much more powerful capstone experience for the master’s program. We only incorporated comps when required to do so by the then-dean to address a severe budget shortfall and also when comps were written into a federal grant proposal merging our master’s program with a teaching credential. This grant has since concluded, as has the comprehensive exam requirement; even during lean budget years, the faculty do not plan to reinstitute this culminating experience option.

Finally, the program faculty need to revisit and update our SOAP during this AY, as well as determine the best way to approach program elevation, taking our program from an M.A. in Education, Curriculum and Instruction option to an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction.