

Early Childhood Education

Summary of Assessment Accomplishments

2007-2008 Academic Year

Submitted by: Susan Peet, Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator, STL
Marcia Rybczynski, Early Childhood Assessment Coordinator, STL

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Learning Outcomes: Our learning outcomes are based on the standards of our professional association, NAEYC, The National Association for the Education of Young Children:

1. Promoting Child Development and Learning. Students use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for all children.

2. Building Family and Community Relationships. Students know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.

3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families. Students know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence children's development and learning.

4. Teaching and Learning. Students integrate their understanding of and relationships with children and families; their understanding of developmentally effective approaches to teaching and learning; and their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for all children.

5. Becoming a Professional. Students identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

Annual Report

1. Learning (or Service) Outcomes assessed this year:

Last year, we reported on our efforts to prepare for NCATE accreditation, with a focus on NAEYC Standard 1, 2, 4 and 5. This year, we focused our attention on improving the key assessment for NAEYC Standard 2. Key assessment #8, Family Case Studies, is an assessment that is embedded in HDFS 225, Family Systems and Community Partnerships. The assessment is used to document student progress toward NAEYC learning outcome #2 (Building Family and Community Relationships) by measuring students' knowledge of complex characteristics of children's families and communities.

Experiences from data collection of key assessments during the '06-'07 academic year suggested the need to improve consistency in implementation of assessment #8. The Early Childhood program area struggled with consistency on these assessments due to significant communication challenges within the program's structure. A major challenge for the Early Childhood program is to offer consistency in program delivery between two campuses (i.e., main campus and Firelands campus). Each course in the Early Childhood program is taught on main and Firelands campus. The courses are standardized by blue sheets, master syllabi, and learning objectives. However, in some cases, there has been a lack of consistency regarding assessment tools and rubrics for key assessments due to inherent challenges posed by distance and time limitations. In response to these challenges, the Early Childhood Program area placed priority on strengthening, modifying and standardizing key assessment #8 during the 2007-2008 academic year.

2. **Assessment Methods and Procedures:**

HDFS 225, Family Systems and Community Partnerships, is a course that has been taught on two campuses by three different individuals, i.e., Dawn Murrell, Ruben Viramontez-Anguiano and Ruthann Steinbrunner. The development of the key assessment evolved over time and therefore there were different ideas about the content and methodology of the tool. Essentially, faculty members were using different assignments, case studies and rubrics for evaluating student understanding on Standard 2.

The issues with the key assessment were highlighted in the July 2007 National Recognition Report from NAEYC. Specifically, the report indicates "Assessment 8 may provide evidence for meeting this standard in the future; however, the assignment has been changed and no data are available on the new assessment."

Even before the NAEYC report feedback, the program recognized that the Standard 2 assessment did not adequately address the core elements involved in that outcome. The program also identified a need to focus the assessment more on how student learned to interact with families, in relation to the problem-solving skills needed for classroom teachers.

Given these concerns, HDFS faculty met and developed a revised Assessment 8 for use during the spring of 2007. While this assessment was more focused in relation to Standard 2, there were some concerns about rubric language and the actual implementation of the assessment in similar ways across campuses.

In August, 2007 Marcia Rybczynski requested that Dr. Ruben Viramontez-Anguiano and Dr. Steinbrunner collaborate to standardize the assignment. Specifically, Drs.

Viramontez-Anguiano and Steinbrunner were asked to standardize:

- a) the assignment was an in-class assignment or a take-home assignment,
- b) availability of outside resources to assist with responding to the case studies,
- c) the number of case studies in the assignment, and
- d) an answer key.

Drs. Viramontez-Anguiano and Steinbrunner met during the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008 in the development/modification of the assessment tool. Early in the Spring 2008 semester, Drs. Viramontez-Anguiano and Steinbrunner presented the program with a revision of the assessment, with a complete description of the assignment, identification

of scoring guidelines, and a revised rubric with more concrete language. Data was collected on this assessment and will be summarized below.

3. Inferences from Assessments:

Data:

Spring 2008	Main Campus n = 66	Firelands Campus n = 19
Unacceptable	1 (1.5%)	1 (5.2%)
Acceptable	25 (37.8%)	11 (57.9%)
Target	39 (59%)	7 (36.7%)

Although the data provided from the new assessment is only for one semester (Spring 2008), it suggests the need for continuing the dialogue on this assessment.

During that semester, the course was taught in one large section (N = 66) on the main campus and one relatively small section (N = 19) on the Firelands campus.

While the course sizes vary substantially, it is still important to examine these data more closely. At the unacceptable level, each campus had only 1 student performing at this low level, therefore, no trends can be detected from these data. At the acceptable and target levels, there was, however, a noteworthy contrast in the data. At Firelands, 58% of the students were at the acceptable level and 37% were at the target level. At the main campus, 38% of the students were at the acceptable level and 59% of the students at the target level.

This “reversal” in the data deserves further analysis. While it could reflect differences in student populations across campuses or within specific class sections, it may also reflect some differences in rubric interpretation and scoring.

4. Actions Taken/Program Improvements:

Faculty efforts to more effectively address Standard 2 have resulted in the development of a more effective assessment. Appendix A presents the theoretical framework that underlies the newly revised assessment. Appendix B provides a complete description of the assignment which should ensure that implementation is similar across campuses and instructors. Appendix C gives the scoring rubric, which has been revised to be more specific and concrete in its articulation of qualities. Appendix D gives guidelines for scoring.

In the Fall 2008 semester, Dr. Marcia Rybczynki will meet with the instructors to work with them to analyze the data trend and to adjust scoring procedures or the rubric as needed for data collection in that semester. Additional papers will be collected to help with the discussion and to serve as exemplars for future scoring.

Analysis of this data in January will be used to determine if additional work needs to be completed during the spring semester.

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Appendix A: The Theoretical framework for the Family Diversity Case Study Assessment

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The three social systems (families, schools, and communities) provide distinct strengths that impact children's learning through social and cultural contexts. The key assessment aims to evaluate the degree to which pre-service teachers have learned to navigate the intersection of these systems and gained skills to be able to use best practices with diverse families, schools and communities. The analysis of a case study provides the student with a real-life scenario in which to demonstrate the knowledge and skills developed through the course.

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Appendix B: Description of the Family Diversity Case Study

Rationale: As teachers you will need to be good listeners, observers and decision makers in your classroom. You will be working closely with children, staff members, families and the community to create the best education and support system for each individual in your class. Through case study analysis you learned how to evaluate a problem, how to make decisions and how to stand by those decisions when necessary, or change them if needed.

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Requirements: You will write an analysis paper for Case #10 – What Words Don't Say (Weiss, et.al, pp. 144-150). At the end of this assignment sheet are questions you will need to address in your paper. Paper requirements include:

- computer-generated or word processed, Microsoft Word or WordPerfect *only*
- double-spaced, size 12-font
- 1-2 pages in length.
- Submission of your paper may be through the Assignments page as a document file, as an email attachment, or as a paper copy as your instructor directs.
- Due by
- Use material learned in class as well as your readings (including NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct) should be applied to the solutions you formulate.
- ***Read the rubric before you begin your paper so are aware of how the paper will be scored.***
- Analyzing the case you should take the following steps:
 1. Read the case and the questions posed in the text and below.
 2. Define the issue(s).
 3. Generate possible solutions. The solutions should be based on information learned in class or through your reading. You should give rationales that support your views from what was learned in the class and not personal opinion.

Questions about Case # 10:

1. Identify and describe the perspectives of the key players within this case and the relationships each has with the others.
2. With an eco-cultural lens, describe the actions Loreen has taken to socialize her son. Consider how her actions relate to the Triple Quandary Theory.
3. What is the teacher's ethical responsibility as an early childhood professional to Martin, his family, and other children from underrepresented groups in her school (Draw on the NAEYC Code).

4. What intervention strategies do you feel will be the most effective and why?
Describe the influence of ecological systems for each of the strategies suggested.

Structure of the Written Report:

1. Title page with your name, course number and date
2. Your response paper that follows the steps from the requirements section.
3. A blank copy of the rubric (unless you are submitting online).

▲ Source of Case: Weiss, H.B., Kreider, H, Lopez, M. E., & Chatman, C.M. (eds.) (2005).
Preparing Educators to Involve Parents: From theory to practice. Thousand Oaks,CA:
Sage.

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Appendix C: Scoring Rubric for the Family Diversity Case Study Assessment

Criteria	Unacceptable 0-1	Acceptable 2-3	Target 4-5
1. Theory to practice understanding —within the realm of home, school, and community relationships	<p>Demonstrates little or superficial understanding of family and community characteristics, resources, and influences on development and learning, specifically eco-cultural contexts, diversity, and family/school/community relationships.</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Demonstrates a limited understanding of the concept of family and community characteristics, resources, and influences on development and learning, specifically eco-cultural contexts, diversity, and family/school/community relationships. Applied Course material is not evident.</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Demonstrates a clear and deep understanding of course material covering family and community characteristics, resources, and the multiple influences on development and learning. Including effective classroom approaches for early education, eco-cultural contexts, diversity, and family/ school/ community relationships.</p> <p>Points:</p>
2. Identifies Issues	<p>Inadequate identification and description of the problem(s) represented in the case study, specifically eco-cultural contexts, diversity, and family/school/ community relationships and resources.</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Addresses some of the issues or problems within the case study with limited understanding of ethical, professional guidelines specifically eco-cultural contexts, diversity, and family/ school/community relationships and resources. Applied Course material about cultural competency is not evident.</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Demonstrates a clear understanding of the issues or problems represented in the case study, clearly understands and applies the ethical conduct standards and professional guidelines of NAEYC. Applied Course material about cultural competency, eco-cultural contexts, diversity, and family/ school/ community relationships and resources is related.</p> <p>Points:</p>
3. Proposed Solutions	<p>Proposed solution is superficial, lacks evidence of supporting families and involving them in their children's development and learning through developmentally and culturally appropriate practices. Lacks clear understanding of effective approaches, strategies and tools for early education that are grounded in culturally competent practice and family/community resources.</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Suggests possible solutions for empowering and supporting families and involves them in their children's development and learning through developmentally and culturally appropriate practices. Some understanding of effective classroom approaches, strategies and tools for early education that are grounded in culturally competent practice and family/community resources.</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Thoughtfully analyzes possible solutions that support and empower families to be involved in their children's learning and development through developmentally and culturally appropriate practices. The solutions are built on respectful, reciprocal relationships, show understanding of effective classroom approaches, strategies and tools for an early education classroom that are grounded in culturally competent practice and family/community resources.</p> <p>Points:</p>
4. Writing skills	<p>Grammatical and/or spelling errors. Acceptable writing has not been demonstrated</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Written work is acceptable with few grammatical or spelling errors</p> <p>Points:</p>	<p>Demonstrates a typewritten, clear, organized, well-written paper with no grammatical or spelling errors</p> <p>Points:</p>
Totals			

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Appendix D: Scoring Guidelines for the Family Diversity Case Study Assessment

HDFS 225 Case Study Scoring Guidelines

Theory to practice understanding:- Specific Course Materials

Demonstrates a clear understanding of:

Different diverse families, their needs, and strengths

The need for reciprocal relationships needed between family, school and communities and the influences supportive relationships have on the child.

The right of parents to participate in the decision-making processes involving their children

Warm, accepting school staff that provides an inviting atmosphere that is culturally competent.

Development of home-school partnership is essential for optimal development.

Identifies Issue:-

Families should be informed of program philosophy, policies and curriculum

Involve the family in significant decisions affecting their child

Implement shared information about children into the program plan

Families and Teachers need each other's support

Relationships between school and home are reciprocal

Parents need to know that teachers like and accept their child

Parents need to know that teachers will accept them without judgment

Proposed Solutions

Identify principles and ideals on Family from NAEYC Code of Ethical conduct and Statement of Commitment that apply to this case.

Solutions reflect respectful and reciprocal interactions and relationships

Provide regular two-way communication, both positive and negative

Parents should participate in decisions made about their child

Be accommodating to family's/parent's schedules

Be familiar with and appropriately refer families to community resources

Family funds of knowledge applied to this case.

Create effective, culturally competent solutions to the issues presented in this case.

