

SELF STUDY

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

I. Introduction and Overview of the Program

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Graduate Program is a university-approved graduate program in the Kremen School of Education and Human Development at California State University, Fresno. The ECE graduate program offers course work leading to: 1) the Master's of Arts in Education, ECE Option; and/or 2) California Early Childhood Specialist Credential approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The ECE Specialist Credential is an additional, advanced credential available only to those already holding a valid California teaching credential. While not required, virtually all ECE Specialist candidates also complete their MA degree during the program.

The current enrollment in the advanced program is 49 students.

The “ECE Teacher Leader Specialization” was developed to meet the specific requirements for the ECE Specialist Credential. In addition to completing the 30 units of advanced ECE course work in the program (see below), ECE teachers must have two years of successful teaching experience at two ECE levels prior to applying for the for their ECE Specialist Credential.

The “ECE Program Leader Specialization” addresses the diversified needs of ECE professionals and allows greater flexibility in meeting requirements in a variety of settings beyond the traditional K-3 classroom.

The Master of Arts (MA) in Education with an option in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and the ECE Specialist Program provide specialized advanced preparation for professionals in a variety of settings involving work and leadership activities related to young children and/or their families. Graduates of these advanced programs are ECE professionals prepared to advocate for the best interests of children and families as well as quality ECE programs because candidates: 1) know the content; 2) excel in research-based practices; 3) collaborate and give importance to relationships; 4) model professional ethics and 5) provide constructive leadership and focused advocacy.

Two years ago, the MA in Education graduate program eliminated prerequisite education course work. Until that time, the ECE program required 15 units of prerequisite course work in education or child development. With the new requirement that all candidates in NAEYC Advanced Program possess initial ECE certification, we are in the process of making this program change. The requirement will be stated in the catalogue as follows: Applicants “must meet qualifications for ECE Master Teacher Permit (BA/BS degree

plus 12 units ECE or Child Development and 3 units supervised ECE fieldwork) or hold a valid teaching credential.”

The ECE Graduate Program provides students with relevant educational and professional experiences to advance in careers in ECE and related professions and to become leaders in the ECE profession at the local, state and national levels. The developmental emphasis of the ECE Graduate Program is birth through age eight. Students in the ECE Graduate Program represent a cross-section of the ECE field that includes: kindergarten-primary grade teachers, preschool teachers, head start teacher/supervisors, family ECE providers, center and program administrators, educators in human service agencies, infant/toddler caregivers, child life specialists, resource teachers, migrant program educators and others. International students enter the ECE masters or Specialist Program for advanced training because of its coherent philosophy, knowledge base and practice applicable to the education of children the world over.

Joyce M. Huggins Early Education Center (Huggins Center) – Marlene Fansler Infant and Toddler Program and D. Paul Fansler Preschool and
The D. Paul Fansler Institute for Leadership in ECE

Our ECE program is fortunate to have as resources the Huggins Center and Fansler Institute. It is the mission of the Huggins Center to be an exemplary model for best practices ECE. The Huggins Center offers leadership for local and state efforts to improve ECE and services to children and families in the following ways:

- Preparing teachers and others in human services professions
- Demonstrating innovative programs, curricula and resources
- Conducting relevant research

The Huggins Center is fully accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Accredited programs are committed to meeting national standards for quality in early education.

The Fansler Leadership Institute sponsors professional development initiatives for early ECE professionals. The Fansler Leadership Institute is dedicated to growing capable and active ECE leaders able to apply ECE theory, research and innovative approaches to development of ECE programs for our region. A wide range of experiences is offered: seminars, tours, workshops, institutes and conferences. These programs are intended for early childhood educators at all levels of the career ladder—students, assistants, providers, teachers, specialists and administrators—who teach or work in a variety of settings that include: preschools, kindergartens, family child care homes, infant toddler programs, primary grades, organizations and agencies in the public and private sectors. Our graduate students attend many of these programs and these programs lead to successful recruitment of more students for the graduate program.

ECE Graduate Programs: Master of Arts and Specialist Credential

Masters of Arts Degree in Education-ECE Option (30 units)

Required ECE Core Courses (6 Units)

- LEE 235 Concept Development in ECE (3 units)
LEE 241 Field Work in ECE (3 units)

Elective ECE Core Courses (12 units, Select 3 of 4 courses)

- LEE 171 Trends and Issues in ECE (3 units)
LEE 232 Literacy in ECE (3 units)
LEE 233 Curriculum and Assessment in ECE (3 units)
LEE 271 Diversity and Inclusion in ECE (3 units)

Masters of Arts Degree Core Requirements (15 Units)

- ERF 153 Educational Statistics (Prerequisite for ERF 220)
ERF 220 Research in Education (3 units)
ERF 285 Seminar in Advanced Educational Psychology (3 units) or
ERF 288 Educational Measurement and Program Evaluation (3 units)
LEE 298B Project (4 units) or
LEE 299 Thesis (4 units)

Other Electives

5 units of approved electives

Early Childhood Specialist Credential (30 units)

The ECE Specialist Credential Program is an advanced credential for those who already hold a valid California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. For the Specialist Credential, two years of successful ECE teaching at two levels of ECE is required.

The ECE Specialist Program may be combined with the Master's program or taken separately. Master's candidates in the ECE Teacher Leader Specialization may use their course work to fulfill requirements for the ECE Specialist Credential. For the Specialist Credential only, a Thesis or Final Project is not required.

Required ECE Core Courses (6 Units)

- LEE 235 Concept Development in ECE (3 units)
LEE 241 Field Work in ECE (3 units)

Elective ECE Core Courses (9 units, Select 3 of 4 courses)

- LEE 171 Trends and Issues in ECE (3 units)
LEE 232 Literacy in ECE (3 units)
LEE 233 Curriculum and Assessment in ECE (3 units)

LEE 271 Diversity and Inclusion in ECE (3 units)

Other Electives

15 units approved electives

ECE Graduate Program Faculty

All ECE Graduate Program Faculty hold doctorates in ECE or closely related field, have previous teaching experience with young children, contribute to professional organizations and are accomplished scholars.

Shareen Abramson, Ph.D. (Vanderbilt University) - Coordinator, ECE Graduate Program, Director of the Huggins Early Education Center; D. Paul Fansler Chair for Leadership in ECE, Reggio Emilia Approach, innovative curriculum, diverse learners, leadership development

Jacques Benninga, Ph.D. (Vanderbilt University) - Psychological and cultural foundations of education, character education, professional ethics, concept development

Pamela Lane-Garon, Ph.D. (Arizona State)
Educational psychology; peer mediation and conflict resolution, character education and professional ethics.

Judith Neal, Ed.D. (University of the Pacific)
Department, Chair, Literacy and Early Education
Reading recovery; early intervention; literacy instruction

Marilyn Shelton, Ph.D. (Ohio State University) - Multicultural education, professional portfolios, alternatives to violence, computers for young children

ECE Graduate faculty are active professionals who are members and/or leaders in the following professional organizations: National Association for the Education of Young Children, Association for Childhood International, International Reading Association, Reading Recovery Council of North America, North American Reggio Emilia Alliance, Phi Delta Kappa and Association for Curriculum and Supervision.

II. Previous Action Plan or Recommendations from Prior Review

In 2001-2002, the ECE Graduate faculty began regular meetings to review and revise program standards and construct a series of assessments aligned to the standards that would provide valid, reliable and complete data of our students' learning and growth during the program and as a final measure of student competence in standards of performance. The resulting program revisions and assessments began to be implemented in 2002-2003. That year, the faculty met as a whole and engaged in a systematic review

and analysis of student data from the project and thesis assessment. The results of data analysis led to these findings:

Findings: 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, the project activities in some cases but were weak in the application of knowledge and research to ECE issues.

Findings: 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.

Findings: 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 show growth in this area.

III. Departmental Description and Evaluation of the Program

The ECE program’s assessments are consistent with the unit and university policies. 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.

As part of the program, candidates must also meet a graduate writing requirement. In the ECE program, this critical assessment is made in LEE 235: Concept Development in ECE. The ECE Program has developed a unique set of program assessments that monitor the progress of candidates through a spiraling series of steps toward competence as an ECE Leader. During the program, seven assessments are made of students that respond directly to NAEYC Core Standards for Advanced Programs and the Essential Professional Tools. Assessment is an ongoing process in the ECE Graduate Program and begins at the initial interview of a prospective program applicant. As part of SOAP, the Alumni and Employer Survey are required by the unit as a post-program assessment.

New Trends

The ECE Graduate Program is responsive to new trends in the field. Content in the courses has been revised and expanded to include: NAEYC's Early Learning Standards, increased emphasis on infant and toddler early education, programs and services for inclusion of children with special needs, early intervention and developing multiple literacies.

B. Effectiveness of the Instructional Program

Student Learning Outcomes as Developed in the Program's Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (SOAP)

As a result of the NCATE accreditation visit, the ECE Graduate Program outcome assessments were aligned with the assessment requirements for the NCATE/NAEYC standards for advanced programs in ECE.

While preserving the integrity of the assessments developed for the SOAP, these measures were refined and expanded. Detailed descriptions of assessments, including rubrics and scoring procedures were also designed. These changes substantially strengthened the program's SOAP.

The Early Childhood Education Graduate Program is the only NCATE approved ECE advanced program in the state of California. This places our program in a unique leadership position for preparing highly qualified ECE professionals able to implement quality early education programs for young children.

Below are the SOAP assessments for the ECE Graduate Program:

- #1 (Required) Assessment of Content Knowledge:
Final Project/Thesis and Presentation (MA only)
LEE 298/299
OR
Research Paper and Presentation (Specialist, no MA)
LEE 235
NAEYC Standards 1, 4, 5: Essential Tools 3, 4-6
CTC Standard 2.1

- #2 (Required) Assessment of Content Knowledge:
ECE Teacher Leader Portfolio OR
ECE Program Leader Portfolio
LEE 241
NAEYC Standards 1-5, Essential Tools 1-9
CTC Standard 1.3. 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.2, 1.3.4

#3 (Required) Assessment of Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

Charter School Project: Envisioning Developmentally Appropriate Practice,
Birth-Third Grade

LEE 171, LEE 232, LEE 233, LEE 271

(Elective courses, take 3 out of 4 courses)

NAEYC Standards 1, 2, 3, 4; Essential Tools 1, 4, 5, 7, 8

CTC Standards 2.1, 2.1.2

#4 (Required) Assessment of Professional Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

Leadership Activity

LEE 241

NAEYC Standard 5; Essential Tools 3, 7, 9

CTC Standards 1.3.1, 2.1, 2.1.1

#5 (Required) Effects on Student Learning

Action Research Project

LEE 285

NAEYC Standards 1, 3, 4 Essential Tools 3, 4, 5, 6

CTC Standards 1.3.1, 2.1

#6 (Required) Additional Assessment

Ethics/Dispositions

Initial Interview and LEE 171 (pre-tests)

LEE 241 (post-tests)

Standards 1, 2, 5; Essential Tools 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9

CTC Standard 2.1, 2.1.1

#7 Alumni Survey (all MA options)

#8 Employer Survey (all MA options)

Description of Assessments, Summary of Findings and Interpretations

Required Assessment #1: Assessment of Content Knowledge

Summative Assessment: Final Project, Thesis and Research Paper

NAEYC Standards 1, 4, 5; Essential Tools 3, 4-6,

Description of the Assessment and Use in the Program:

The summative assessment represents the culminating experience for students in the ECE Graduate Program. Three culminating experiences are offered: 1a) Final Project, is the most popular; 1b) Thesis, for students with a strong interest in research and 1c) Research Paper for those who wish to complete requirements for the ECE Specialist Credential, an advanced teaching credential, without obtaining their MA degree.

All versions of the culminating experience include a significant scholarly undertaking that is relevant to the ECE field. It must demonstrate originality, independent thinking, effective organization, and writing proficiency descriptive of graduate level work. The completed work for all assessment versions includes a comprehensive literature review. The final project makes a significant leadership contribution such as a resource, activity, service, curriculum or intervention. Once the candidate's proposal has been accepted, the writing of the project proceeds with frequent meetings with the advisor for guidance and input. It is expected that the candidate will negotiate distal and proximal goals with the project advisor. When determined complete, the project is subjected to the evaluation schema and ranked with expectations not met, met or exceeded. The thesis is an ambitious research endeavor that allows students to work with a faculty committee to design, conduct and analyze research in an applied setting. The evaluation of a thesis has many complex elements. Finally the research project allows Specialist Credential candidates the opportunity to pursue a specific interest through an in depth review of the literature.

Alignment of the Assessment with the Specific SPA Standards Addressed by the Assessment as Identified in Section III:

The Project Assessment is aligned with specific SPA standards 1, 4 and 5 and four of the nine essential professional tools listed below:

- 1a Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.
- 1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning.
- 4a. Knowing, understanding, and using positive relationships and supportive interactions.
- 4b. Knowing, understanding and using effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education.
- 4c. Knowing and understanding the importance, central concepts, inquiry tools, and structures of content areas or academic disciplines.
- 4d. Using own knowledge and other resources to design, implement, and evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum to promote positive outcome.
- 5a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field.
- 5b. Knowing and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines
- 5d. Integrating knowledge, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education.

Tool 3: Communication Skills

Tool 4: Mastery of Relevant Theory and Research

Tool 5: Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources

Tool 6: Inquiry Skills and Knowledge of Research Methods

The primary focus in the project may be considered application of the Tools in making a contribution to the profession. For example, it is through the process of inquiry and interpretation of findings or the creation of new tools that the profession is advanced—and thus the candidate inducted as a member of the profession. The assessment of these areas of performance are essential in establishing the candidate's professional knowledge, skills and dispositions to be an ECE leader.

Summary of Data Findings

In the last three years, 28 candidates have completed projects. The majority of products exceeded expectations as per the data.

Interpretation of Data

However review and scoring of projects by the faculty as a whole revealed that nearly all projects had exceptionally strong reviews of the literature but lacked a strong project activity. This was not surprising since students have an entire advanced course, ERA 220, Research in Education that has as its main assignment the development of the review. After much discussion, the faculty determined that the appropriate experience for preparing for a final project would be LEE 241 fieldwork, a course that was also in need of revision due to the new NAEYC standards. As a result, and as described in Section V, a better sequencing of coursework was developed. In the second year of the graduate program, in conjunction with the ERA 220 course, graduate students would take the required fieldwork experience. From this experience, areas for leadership, research and quality improvement could be identified for project development. As part of this program change, based on specialization and interests, all graduate students are assigned to an adviser who works with them from the beginning of their studies to define a focus of professional expertise and practice. Their adviser also supervises their fieldwork and project. A monthly seminar encourages collaboration and exchange of ideas and resources during the fieldwork and development of the project.

The 2002-2005 projects showed dramatic improvement in project 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 ECE settings. Project topics included:

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

Required Assessment #2: Assessment of Content Knowledge:

Portfolio Assessment

NAEYC Standards 1-5, Essential Tools 1-9

Description of the Assessment and Use in the Program:

A major requirement of the course is the development of an ECE professional portfolio. This evaluative portfolio provides cumulative evidence that the graduate student meets the standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for an ECE professional at the advanced level. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the professional organization charged with preparing these standards for NCATE.

In conjunction with the field experience and with additional support from previous ECE course work and assignments, Students document and organize the cumulative evidence of their ability to use the nine essential ECE professional tools identified by NAEYC in order to demonstrate growth as an ECE professional in their identified specialization. Documentation may include evidence from ECE graduate studies, fieldwork and professional experiences.

Based on an initial self-assessment in relation to each tool, students developed an individualized plan for addressing “gaps” during fieldwork through a reading research program and focused field experiences, visits and observations.

The portfolio is compiled in the last semester of the program prior to doing a project or thesis. This year we have made some major changes in the portfolio assignment. We have refined the field study, clarified the role of the philosophy statement as an integral unifying component for analyzing and selecting evidence to document learning. We have included sections for DAP Charter School - Combined Assessment and additional ECE Specialist field work requirements.

The alignment of the assessment with the specific SPA standards

The portfolio assessment includes each of the nine essential NAEYC Professional Tools. The tools are: Cultural Competence, Knowledge and Application of Ethical Principles, Communication Skills, Mastery of Relevant Theory and Research, Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources, Inquiry Skills and Knowledge of Research Methods, Skills in Collaborating, Teaching, and Mentoring, Advocacy Skills, Leadership Skills.

NAEYC's Advanced Professional Preparation Core Standards for Early Childhood Programs - Standard 5: Growing as a Professional, is also assessed by the portfolio. The portfolio's self-assessments and reflections address the nature of continuous learning and reflection. The portfolio also requires candidates to demonstrate knowledge, reflective, and critical perspectives on their work, and making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. Documentation of the field experience and the field study component address the candidates conduct in the ECE field.

Summary of Findings

Major revisions to the ECE fieldwork were made over the last two years in order to align the content and experience with NAEYC Standards and the Essential Professional Tools. As a result, the course was not offered for almost two years. Because the portfolio is a major assignment for this experience, only very limited data are available at this time.

Three students were enrolled in the fieldwork last Spring and completed their portfolios. While their products provided an impressive and extensive body of evidence, there was a lack of reflective analysis in their own examining professional growth. The amount of materials gathered was cumbersome. Requirements have been made more specific in the

directions and a detailed rubric provided for each area. More reflective analyses for each area and an electronic presentation of portfolio materials are being required this semester.

Interpretation of Data

The portfolio provided a cumulative, comprehensive organized system for assessing outcomes in meeting NAEYC standards and acquiring professional tools cross course work, field studies and professional experiences for our students.

The data demonstrate that students met the NAEYC Standards described in this assessment with particularly strong documentation provided of student's facility in using the nine essential professional tools. More attention to areas discussed above will be provided students concerning this major assignment.

Required Assessment #3: Assessment of Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

Combined Charter School Assessment

NAEYC Standards 1,2, 3, 4, Essential Tools 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8

Description of the Assessment and Use in the Program:

Charter schools are an innovative approach to educational reform. Because they are unencumbered by the restrictive regulations governing other public schools, charter schools provide choices for families with accountability for results. In a charter school, teachers, parents and children to have a commitment to a shared educational vision. A major assignment in the four ECE elective courses, the Charter School Project makes real the ideals of our field: developmentally and culturally appropriate practices (DAP) and a quality, comprehensive ECE program spanning birth through third grade.

The combined charter school assessment is based on multiple opportunities for candidates to demonstrate proficiency in their professional knowledge, skills and dispositions in Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), birth through third grade. For each of the ECE elective courses (LEE 171, 232, 233, 271), a common set of requirements for the charter school project is provided for addressing standards. This design ensures that no matter which three of the four electives are taken, all students are expected to achieve the same level of mastery. The charter school project in each elective has the following similar requirements:

- 1) Evidence of professional knowledge: a research paper that addresses course content, objectives, specialization and a developmental level (LEE 171-**home visitation**; LEE 232-**language and literacy**; LEE 233-**curriculum and assessment**; LEE 271-**cultural competence**).
- 2) Evidence of professional skills: Designing, implementing and evaluating instruction (LEE 232, 233, 271), programs or services (LEE 171, LEE 271) through documentation and analysis of an exemplary practice (iMovie, photo panel, powerpoint presentation).

- ECE Teacher Leaders – Must demonstrate skill (LEE 232-literacy, 233-curriculum) May demonstrate skill, document observation or provide class simulation (LEE 171-home visiting, LEE 271-related to cultural competence).
ECE Program Leaders—May demonstrate skill, document observation or provide class simulation (all classes)
- 3) Evidence of professional dispositions and commitment to children, families and DAP: Charter School plan for Integration and Implementation (Paper, Drawing, Diagram, etc.)

To pass the Combined Charter School assessment, candidates complete three different charter school assignments in three ECE elective courses While each assignment is separately assessed, the data from the three assignments are aggregated for the Charter School Assessment. The assessment is conducted in LEE 241 based on the data from each of the three elective courses included in the candidate's portfolio.

Alignment of the Assessment of the Assessment with the Specific SPA Standards

While different configurations of ECE elective courses may be taken, the NCATE Advanced Program standards are covered in at least two ECE elective courses. Therefore all students must demonstrate proficiency in at least one course, but typically in two or more courses. The Combined Charter School Assessment is aligned with the standards and tools listed below:

NCATE Advanced Program Standards

Standard 1: Promoting Child Development and Learning (LEE 171, 232, 233, 271)

Standard 2: Building Family and Community Relationships (LEE 171, 271)

Standard 3: Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families (LEE 232, 233)

Standard 4: Teaching and Learning (LEE 232, 233)

Standard 5: Growing as a professional (LEE 171, 232, 233, 271)

Essential Tools

1. Cultural Competence (LEE 171, LEE 271)

2. Knowledge and Application of Ethical Principles (LEE 171, LEE 271)

3. Communication Skills (LEE 171, 232, 233, 271)

4. Mastery of Relevant Theory and Research (LEE 171, 232, 233, 271)

5. Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources (LEE 171, 232, 233, 271)

7. Skills in Collaborating, Teaching, and Mentoring (LEE 171, 232, 233, 271)

Summary of Data Findings

Data are presented for the DAP Charter School – Curriculum and Assessment Component only. This assignment has been required in LEE 233 for the last two years. As the data demonstrate, this assignment proved to be a powerful vehicle for eliciting from students demonstration of knowledge, skills and dispositions and effects on student learning in relation to NAEYC core standards and course objectives. Moreover the assignment allowed students to provide evidence in different forms—video demonstration, photo documentation, research paper, etc, schematic drawings. Some

video vignettes included demonstrations of early writing instruction in K through a one-on-one interactive writing activity, shared reading and a variety of curriculum projects with students. Demonstrating use of assessment tools was particularly valuable.

Because it appeared to be highly effective in providing standards-based evidence as well as encouraging candidates to strive for an exemplary level of ECE practice, the project is now being expanded to encompass assignments across the elective courses. The expanded, multi-course Charter School Project has been implemented in Fall 2005. The results of these assignments will be aggregated for the Combined Charter School Assessment. Data for the Charter School - Combined Assessment will be available in Spring, 2006.

An Interpretation of Data Provides Evidence for Meeting Standards

The available data demonstrated that all students met or exceeded expectations for this assessment. Future aggregated data should provide even more evidence that candidates possess professional knowledge, skills and dispositions through repeated demonstrations in three different ECE courses. Because the assessments for the assignment have been standardized across courses and have similar performance expectations, a very high confidence level will be obtained for meeting indicated standards and in using the professional tools.

Required Assessment #4: Assessment of Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions Leadership Activity Assessment

NAEYC Standards 1, 2, 5, Essential Tools 3, 7, 9

Description of the Assessment and Use in the Program:

Regardless of the setting or role of an ECE professional, advocacy for children, families and ECE programs requires specific leadership skills. It is crucial that ECE leaders employ strategies that persuade decision-makers to make constructive changes to improve ECE quality and make investments in children's programs (Edelman, 2002). ECE leaders who champion quality for children have the potential to have a significant impact. ECE leadership requires going beyond day-to-day crises to develop a vision of ECE in the context of the profession and the larger community (Bella and Bloom, 2003).

In the ECE graduate program, candidates are expected to engage in a significant leadership activity as part of their fieldwork in LEE 241, typically taken in the second year of graduate studies. The leadership activity marks a significant stage in the development of the graduate student who must demonstrate the ability to provide positive and constructive leadership as an ECE teacher leader or ECE program leader. In many cases, the leadership activity emerges out of professional work experiences, course experiences and particular areas of interest that were the focus of the charter school projects and action research assignments. Often the leadership activity is an impetus for further study and commitment to create significant and lasting change in the final project.

The assessment of the student's leadership activity is based on evidence presented by the graduate student in the portfolio as well as an oral presentation made in the seminar

portion of LEE 241. The quality of leadership activity as well as its impact is assessed along the following dimensions: conceptual development of a meaningful area for leadership, preparation for leadership including planning and review of pertinent literature and actualizing the activity in a presentation or call for action.

Alignment of the Assessment with the Specific SPA Standards

The Leadership Activity Assessment is aligned with three specific SPA standards and seven of the nine essential professional tools listed below:

Standard 1: PROMOTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

1a Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.

1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning.

Standard 2: BUILDING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

2a. Knowing about and understanding family and community characteristics

2b. Supporting and empowering families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships

Standard 5 GROWING AS A PROFESSIONAL

5a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field.

5b. Knowing and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

Essential Tools:

Tool 2: Knowledge and Application of Ethical principles

Tool 3: Communication Skills

Tool 4: Mastery of Relevant Theory and Research

Tool 5: Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources

Tool 7. Skills in Collaborating, Teaching, and Mentoring

Tool 8: Advocacy Skills

Tool 9: Leadership Skills

Greatest emphasis for this assessment is standard 5, "Growing as a Professional."

Through the leadership activity, ECE graduate students demonstrate their ability to be ECE teacher leaders or ECE program leaders. Most importantly that become advocates children, families and quality ECE (Standard 5, Tools #8, 9). The choice of the activity, preparation and identification of resources, audience and follow-up are major indicators of the commitment to the ECE field and the education and well-being of children and families (Standard 1, Tools #2, 4, 5). The ability of the candidate to be collaborative, respectful and communicate successfully as well as understand the complexities of family and community are also demonstrated (Standard 2, (Tools #3, 7). The assessment of these areas of performance are essential in establishing the candidate's professional knowledge, skills and dispositions to be an ECE leader.

Summary of Data Findings

The Leadership Activity occurs in LEE 241, fieldwork. Because this course underwent major revisions as part of the university and NCATE program review processes, the fieldwork in its current form was offered for the first time in Spring, 2005, Data for the leadership activity assessment is available for the three students who were enrolled.

Although variability was noted, all three students met the standard of scoring 2 or better on the assessment.

An Interpretation of How the Data Provides Evidence for Meeting Standards:

This assessment is new with only three students assessed. However based on the limited evidence, this assessment is an effective means for measuring leadership and advocacy skills involved in making successful change. Leadership activities included: helping family child care providers develop children’s early literacy, training director’s in using the ECERS and a new administrative leadership scale in evaluating their program; and an inservice program on autism and accessing resources. Revised directions and a more detailed rubric make explicit the steps necessary to creating a sustainable process of change in a specific ECE area.

**Required Assessment #5: Assessment of Effects of Student Learning
Action Research Activity Assessment.**

NAEYC Standards 1, 3, 4; Essential Tools 3, 4, 5, 6

Description of the Assessment and Use in the Program:

Many of the assessment activities in the advanced program result in the learner’s further mastering of the knowledge base specific to the discipline. Our Early Childhood Advanced Candidates participate in Action Research in CI 285 Advanced Seminar in Educational Psychology. Candidates learn how to pose questions and ser them in the context of previous research findings and/or previously established best practices. Throughout the semester, our advanced learners collect research articles to support their investigation, design a methodological protocol, implement, collect data in a small sample and interpret that data for themselves and for their colleagues. The action research most often involves trying new practices in their current setting where they are working with young children. Candidates assemble “the story” of their research on video, power point, poster presentation and/or in the traditional research paper format. Most often “researchers” collaborate on a topic and assist each other with observation, documentation, interpretation and presentation.

All candidates begin in the library on Psych Info and Eric data base search. They select two variables, join them and search. Their research question is either posed in a correlational or predictive or qualitative statement. They map out their plan for the entire semester and assist each other in reaching goals—all while learning about theorists and theories in their weekly classes. Candidates are charged with placing their work in a psychological framework (e.g. constructivism, behaviorism, etc).

The Action Research is assessed as a product whose quality is dependent upon careful planning, collaboration and professional writing and presentation. A complex rubric eventually results in assessment results for each candidate as: not yet meeting expectations, meeting expectations or exceeding expectations.

Alignment of the Assessment with the Specific SPA Standards

The Leadership Activity Assessment is aligned with specific SPA standards one, three and five and six of the essential professional tools listed below:

Standards 1, 3, 5

1a Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.

1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning.

Standard 3a Understanding the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment

Standard 3b. Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches

3c. Understanding and practicing responsible assessment

3d. Knowing about assessment partnerships with families and other professionals.

5a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field.

5b. Knowing and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

5c. Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

5d. Integrating knowledge, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education

Essential Tools:

Tool 2: Knowledge and Application of Ethical principles

Tool 3: Communication Skills

Tool 4: Mastery of Relevant Theory and Research

Tool 5: Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources

Tool 6: Inquiry Skills and Knowledge of Research Methods

Tool 7. Skills in Collaborating, Teaching, and Mentoring

Summary of Data Findings

This Action Research Activity and assessment is implemented in CI 285, a class that meets the candidate along the way (mid-program) to thinking about and designing the final project or research. The action research project centers on student learning and measuring the effects of an implemented change. Many candidates discover their consuming research interest in this class and assimilate and apply knowledge and skills learned in their research methods class. Although the rubric for this research activity is almost identical to that of the culminating research project, the candidates collaborate here and are individually assessed in the final project circumstance. The completion of the complex rubric (see description of actual assignment) finally results in the following ranking:Overall Ranking

1 expectations unmet

2 expectations met

3 expectations exceeded

An Interpretation of How the Data Provides Evidence for Meeting Standards:

Based on the data the majority of students who completed Action Research Projects exceeded expectations over the last three years. This indicates knowledge base as well as skills of inquiry and research methods and, most importantly, significantly positive effects on student learning. Some examples are:

1. An example informing practice from spring semester, 2004 was the *use of key word vocabulary builders in an ECE reading specialist's class*. The candidate's use of this methodology in one class (and comparison to controls) led to her implementation of the key words in all her reading intervention classes. Children, on average increased 2 reading levels with the treatment condition.
2. In another example, one candidate's intervention focus was vigorous outside play vs inside center play and the effect upon attention. The findings contributed to the candidate's commitment to including BOTH in her pre-schoolers' day, even though her hypothesis had predicted that one would yield more positive results than another.

#6 Required Additional Assessment: Assessment of Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

Professional Ethics Assessment

Standards 1, 2, 5; Essential Tools: 2,3,5,7,8,9

The following questions guide our assessment activities in professional ethics development:

"Will our candidates have the knowledge, skills and professional dispositions to assess complex situations, empathize with those affected, predict consequences of various actions and behave ethically?

And if they are well-prepared, "how can we demonstrate their preparedness?"

Currently, the ECE Advanced program is instituting the use of the Ethical Sensitivity Test for Teachers --E-Test DVD--(an independent performance assessment) and adding a second assisted performance assessment (guided ethics scenario discussion format with candidate response). Both assessments are employed at pre and post intervals in the advanced program. The E-Test, a DVD dilemma scenario prompt measuring Ethical Sensitivity, is conducted at the program initial interview and administered again at the close of the program. The second, assisted performance assessment is conducted in LEE 171 at pre test and in LEE 241 at post test.

Together, the assessments measure the professional ethics orientation of ECE Advance program candidates—at the start of the program and at its conclusion. Change scores will be collected starting Fall '05. Each assessment is theoretically grounded in the work of Bebeau (2002), and applies Rest's theory of life-span moral development to ethical development in the professions. Scenario prompts deal with issues of diversity, inclusion, and professional identity. All require critical thinking and reflection.

Description of the Assessment and Use in the Program:

The E- Test Independent Performance Assessment's initial prompt focuses on issues of standardized testing, diversity, ethical testing conditions and professional responsibility to the profession and to the learner. The E-Test Independent Performance Assessment's post program prompt focuses on suspected child abuse and the mandated reporters ethical and legal responsibilities. Both of these prompts are firmly grounded in both

contemporary issues and well-tested theory of the development of professional ethics in the professions (Rest, et. al., 1983; Bebeau, 2002). Feedback will be provided to advanced candidates on their pre-to-post growth. We understand that professional dispositions are gradually adopted in the course of fieldwork, discussion and reflection. Therefore, our outcome measure of interest is demonstrated *professional growth*, rather than high score.

The guided discussion around ethical dilemmas involves our students in an assisted performance assessment. Again, the scenarios deal with issues of diversity, inclusion and professional role identity. All require critical thinking and reflection. One of these discussions involves a teacher who neglects to make a referral to special education for a variety of reasons. The necessity of interprofessional collaboration for the Early Childhood Professional is emphasized. The NAEYC Codes of Ethics are used as guides in the discussion protocol. Following the discussion led by faculty, candidates complete a reflection in which they assume the protagonist role and communicate about and plan action around the problem. Like the independent performance assessment, these are later scored by program faculty. The pre-assessment takes place in LEE 171 and the post assessment in LEE 241.

Alignment of the Assessment with the Specific SPA Standards

The Ethics Assessment is aligned with specific SPA standards 1, 2, 4, and 5 and six of the nine essential professional tools listed below:

- 1a Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs.
- 1b. Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning.
- 2b. Supporting and empowering families and communities through respectful, reciprocal relationships.
- 2c. Involving families and communities in their children's development and learning.
- 4a. Knowing, understanding, and using effective approaches, strategies, and tools for early education.
- 5a. Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field.
- 5b. Knowing and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines
- 5c. Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice.
- 5d. Integrating Knowledge, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education.

Essential Tools:

Tool 2: Knowledge and Application of Ethical principles

Tool 3: Communication Skills

Tool 5: Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources

Tool 7. Skills in Collaborating, Teaching, and Mentoring

Tool 8: Advocacy Skills

Tool 9: Leadership Skills

The subjects and contexts of the ethical dilemmas are child and family situations, the behaviors being encouraged are professional dispositions.

Summary of Data Findings

The E-Test DVD Independent Performance is being administered now to all incoming candidates. In October 2005, the Assisted Performance Assessment will be implemented for the first time. Baseline data with these two assessments is now being collected. On each measure, a high scorer may score 12 points, therefore a pre-to-post score increase of 1 to 3 points would be considered *meeting expectations*. A pre-to-post score increase of >3 points would be considered *exceeding expectations*. Those who do not demonstrate growth in professional ethical disposition as a result of program activity will *not meet expectations*. However, students with a pre and post high scorer with 12 points will be determined to have met expectations.

An Interpretation of How the Data Provides Evidence for Meeting Standards:

In the area of Professional Ethics, to allow maximum time for dispositional change we will compare pre and post data, provide individual feedback to students on their growth in this area and record the number of students falling into the above-stated categories.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ACTIONS:

- Reframe fieldwork to meet diverse needs and interests of ECE graduate students and address standards and professional tools more directly.
- Provide placements in ECE settings outside traditional classrooms—agencies, home-based services, etc.
- Require that fieldwork be taken in second year just prior to final project.
- Strengthen focus on advocacy and significant leadership.
- Add ethics development to courses and assess growth.
- Provide more individualized fieldwork studies based on self-assessment.
- Use fieldwork experience as a basis for identifying a final project topic that relates to significant issues in ECE practice and student learning.
- Provide ongoing mentoring and peer support by assigning groups of graduate students based on interests and specialization to a faculty adviser who works with them from the beginning of the program through the final project.
- Create a leadership orientation to the program by offering specializations: ECE Teacher Leader, ECE Program Leader
- Develop DAP Charter School Project to encourage collaboration, commitment to exemplary practices and change. Require more evidence of effects on student performance, competency and leadership in DAP.
- Encourage development of projects that emerge from field studies, linking together fieldwork and project experience.
- Have the second year focus on collaborative inquiry, leadership and advocacy in the field using plan below:
- Have students meet monthly as a group with their adviser who supervises both their fieldwork and final project.
- During a two-hour meeting in the morning, students dialogue on field work and in a two hour meeting in the afternoon, students dialogue on final projects and theses.

- Both groups have lunch together and are also encouraged to stay for both meetings.
- These meetings foster exchange of ideas, articles and resources, suggest ideas for possible projects, help refine questions and assist students in timely completion of these large assignments.

OUTCOMES

The use of outcome-based assessment and resulting data to make improvements in our program as described have profoundly affected both our students and faculty. Recent examples include:

- 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.
- As part of our DAP Charter School Project in LEE, our students now observe and make home visits in connection with the project described above. The former graduate student who created the project and is now directing this significant intervention project is now a guest instructor for this assignment.
- To expand the role graduates, the *Fansler Faculty* (funded by the local Fansler Foundation) provide consultation to ECE programs in their areas of expertise. To be selected, graduate must also be willing to donate 10 hours of in-kind services.
- Each semester, since 2002, the ECE Program as a whole holds a “**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.

A. Mission and Goals of the Program

In response to new NCATE/NAEYC accreditation guidelines for advanced programs that have come into effect since the development of the ECE Graduate Program SOAP, substantial changes were necessary in the delineation of the mission and goals for the program. To meet these rigorous guidelines, our program now fully aligns with these national standards.

ECE Mission

The ECE advanced program empowers ECE teacher leaders and ECE program leaders to positively affect children's and families' lives and learning. Our program aims to create leaders who are ethical, competent professionals current in the ECE field and advocates for quality ECE. Students with special needs through differentiated instruction

ECE Goals

The specific goals of the ECE program are to develop literate, competent ECE teacher leaders and ECE program leaders who utilize theory, research, and ongoing assessment when making instructional decisions. During their studies in the Option II Credential Program, future teachers become caring and ethical professionals, guided by their knowledge of culturally and developmentally appropriate practices. ECE leaders address the needs of their culturally diverse learners respectfully and responsively. Further, in the course of their ECE program, students develop interprofessional skills necessary to becoming ECE leaders in both the educational community and in the community at large.

The ECE Graduate Program is a learning community committed to developing collaborative leaders who:

- Demonstrate knowledge, skills and dispositions that promote development and learning
- Build strong relationships with families and communities
- Integrate various perspectives to create quality early education for all children
- Are responsive to ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity
- Apply current ECE research to issues of practice
- Utilize a variety of inquiry methods and the latest technology
- Engage in reflection, documentation, self-assessment and life-long learning
- Advocate for children, families and the profession

Through their course work, ECE graduates meet the comprehensive core standards and master the essential professional tools for advanced ECE programs identified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The standards are:

Standard 1: Promoting Child Development and Learning

Standard 2: Building Family and Community Relationships

Standard 3: Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

Standard 4: Teaching and Learning

Standard 5: Growing as a professional

The nine Essential ECE Professional Tools are:

1. Cultural Competence
2. Knowledge and Application of Ethical Principles

3. Communication Skills
4. Mastery of Relevant Theory and Research
5. Skills in Identifying and Using Professional Resources
6. Inquiry Skills and Knowledge of Research Methods
7. Skills in Collaborating, Teaching, and Mentoring
8. Advocacy Skills
9. Leadership Skills

Alignment of the Program and the University's Missions and Goals

The ECE Graduate Program is deeply committed to the vision of excellence for the university. Faculty in the program are outstanding teachers and actively pursue scholarly activities. They are recognized for their leadership in the field and engage in varied community service. They are committed to ongoing planning, program improvement and assessment with the participation of students. Collaboration, interchange and professionalism are shared values. Community partnerships include community colleges, public schools and organizations and agencies serving young children.

Alignment of the ECE Program and the College/School Goals

The KSOEHD theme is: *Leadership for Diverse Communities*. The conceptual framework emphasizes that candidates in the school develop into Ethical, Reflective and Critical Thinkers who Value Diversity and Life-Long Learning. All faculty, including the ECE faculty, in the Kremen School of Education and Human Development foster the development of these dispositions. Candidates will increasingly reflect these dispositions in their work with students, families, and communities.

Our ECE Graduate Program meets common standards for KSOEHD graduate programs as well as having standards specific to ECE.

Curriculum

a. Structure/Coherence of Instructional Program

The ECE program has a coherent instructional program that addresses objectives on the following three dimensions: Content Knowledge, Professional Knowledge Skills and Dispositions and Effects on Student Learning.

ECE Objectives:

Content Knowledge

Engage in advanced study of ECE theories, philosophy, research and practices. (St. 1)

- Demonstrate knowledge of research on human development, teaching and learning and related research on cognitive, physical, social, emotional, language and aesthetic children from birth through age eight and the study of the child in the family and broader ecological context. (T 4)
- Access professional resources to improve ECE programs and services in a variety of contexts serving children and families. (T 5)
- Communicate knowledge to others in varied ways including scholarly writing, informal written communication, orally, visual documentation and through technological formats (T 3)

Professional Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

Design learning experiences that address developmental areas (cognitive, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic, linguistic) as well as content areas of curriculum. (St. 4)

- Demonstrate leadership and advocacy for ECE quality programs and services. (St. 5)
- Demonstrate leadership for improving the ECE field and professional setting. (T 9)
- Offer constructive and productive advocacy for children and families within programs, the community and larger arenas (T 8)
- Demonstrate knowledge and effective use of human service delivery systems and resources serving young children and their families. (St. 2)
- Demonstrate skills in using research methods and findings in ECE and the effective translation of research into practice. (T 6)
- Collaborate with and mentor ECE colleagues, parents and others in varied educational settings to improve the quality of ECE. (T 7)
- Discuss, analyze and plan actions in response to ECE ethical dilemmas .(T2)

Effects on Student Learning

- Develop, implement and evaluate developmentally appropriated curriculum, instruction and assessment strategies children eight and under. (St. 4)
- Respond positively to diversity of family backgrounds and linguistic, social, cultural influences in order to create culturally appropriate ECE services, resources and learning experiences. (T 1)
- Apply research findings and utilize inquiry process to improve teaching, administration and supervision to enhance ECE program quality. (T 6)
- Use assessments that support physical, cognitive, aesthetic, linguistic and psychosocial growth of young children both typical and atypical who are functioning at different developmental levels. (St. 3)
- Analyze results from a variety of sources, including formal and informal measures, for different purposes including understanding individual and group progress, program planning and evaluation. (St 3)
- Engage in critical reflection, observation and documentation as a means for understanding growth and development. (St 3)

All of the ECE core courses require observations and/or practice assignments that must be completed in the field. In all of the courses, advanced students have access to a variety of professional settings in the community where they can gain experience, collect data

and interact with professionals in the field. Expanding on this theory-to-application approach, LEE241 — Fieldwork in ECE — provides advanced candidates with an extended, supervised field experience that is tailored to meet our program's areas of specialization. For the ECE Program Leader, the fieldwork may include varied ECE settings involving work with young children and their families, adult ECE learners and or classroom observation/ teaching in preschool, kindergarten and primary grades. For the ECE Teacher Leader, the focus of fieldwork is completing supervised fieldwork in ECE classroom settings at two different ECE levels. ECE Specialist candidates have additional fieldwork requirements as specified in the course syllabus.

In their field assignments, ECE graduate students demonstrate leadership, knowledge of child development and constructivist theory as well as application of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions gained throughout the ECE Graduate Program. Students create their own portfolios to support the realization of NAEYC standards, conduct individual self-reflections identifying a personal growth area, and plan and implement a leadership activity to be documented in their portfolio.

IV. Recommended Action Plan for the Next 5 – 7 Year Period

Our Mission, goals, instructional program and SOAP plan were updated in conjunction with last Spring's NCATE visit. Our plan for the next 7 year cycle has already been put into place. The specific assessments were described in previous sections of the self-study.