

Education Studies Annual Report

Assessment of Learning Goals

The student learning goals for the Education Studies Department are guided by the College's learning goals, department's mission statement, as well as the professional association standards for Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (in-TASC), and Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards.

During the 2014 – 2015 academic year, we initiated a curriculum mapping process to assess our department's effectiveness in meeting our goal to prepare our candidates to become effective and reflective teachers. This process was guided by a number of different factors including the numerous changes in the NYS teacher certification process, the introduction of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and the new CAEP teacher education accreditation system.

Curriculum Mapping of Education Studies Major Program

The first phase of this curriculum mapping took place during the Fall 2014 semester. In December 2014, each instructor responsible for a required course conducted an in-depth analysis of the course, with a focus on the extent to which the course addressed the above-referenced standards. When a course was determined to address a target standard, the instructor coded the standard as either being introduced (I), reinforced/practiced (R), or mastered (M) in the course. All faculty members in the department met for full-day retreats on 12/11/14, 12/12/14, 1/15/15, 5/6/15, and 5/8/15. Adjuncts who were responsible for core courses were invited to participate in the 12/11/14 meeting as well. During the initial curriculum mapping days, we began with a discussion of each required course, during which the lead instructor went through each standard and discussed to what extent the course introduced (I), reinforced (R), or led to mastery (M) in that standard. During this discussion, other department members had the opportunity to ask for clarification, and often adjustments were made to the shared curriculum map that was being generated.

Following this initial stage (beginning in January 2015), we then began looking horizontally across the curriculum map, to identify areas of unnecessary redundancy and gaps as well as strengths that the program may develop. These discussions led us to generate several course or program-level changes, some of which we were able to begin implementing this year, and some of which we are planning for upcoming years. Our final curriculum mapping meeting for the semester was held on May 8, 2015, when we identified several target areas for program improvement for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The tangible outcome of this activity is the curriculum map we developed of our Education Studies Major (See Attached). The process also generated (though less tangible) opportunities for in-depth discussion of each required courses which allowed

colleagues to observe significant opportunities to make connections across required coursework, in order to foster greater continuity for our students. Additionally, these conversations helped our faculty better understand the experience of our students across their coursework and field experiences.

Utilization of Data to Develop Program Changes

Based on the above analyses, we have been able to plan (and in some cases implement) a number of changes to the program of study and practicum experiences. We ended up focusing these program revisions in several areas: revision of our student teaching seminar course, incorporation of field experiences earlier into our program, implementation of technology workshops, and identification of target standards for future growth.

- Revision to the Student Teaching Seminar: A significant change we have made in preparation for the 2015-2016 academic year is to restructure our student teaching seminar experience to provide for more continuity between the students' course work and their field experiences. To do this, each of faculty members will now teach 2 sections of the student teaching seminar concentrating on their areas of expertise. The purpose of this change is not to introduce new content but to refocus the students' attention on materials they learned in earlier courses and to help them reflect on how the content relates to what they are doing in the field. During our curriculum mapping process we saw that there was a need for students to go back to earlier course readings and learning in order to make effective and salient decisions on their lesson plans and teaching. The faculty members have been discussing the materials that they will reintroduce during the two weeks and how it will relate to the overall student teaching experience. The process is coordinated and guided by our Student Teaching Director, Christine Dawson. Dr. Dawson will lead the seminar for 6 – 7 weeks, during which time she will also refocus their attention on earlier course materials as well as the ed-TPA (one of four NYS certification exams), and other student teaching related issues.
- Incorporation of Field Experiences Earlier in the Program: Our curriculum mapping reinforced the need to provide students with earlier fieldwork opportunities, prior to their first major field experience Junior Block and to integrate these fieldwork experiences into foundational coursework. Motivated by earlier discussions during the curriculum mapping process in Fall 2014, beginning in the Spring 2015 semester, we incorporated a fieldwork component into the Exceptional Child (special education) course. Each student enrolled in that class was required to conduct two focused observations in an elementary school context. We created varied placements for our students, which students attended in pairs (for travel and collaborative purposes). These placements included a range of contexts: self-contained, inclusion, co-taught, push-in/pull-out.

The Children's Literature professor, also implemented a bounded field experience during the Spring 2015 semester, again in response to our data analysis and curriculum mapping work. Fieldwork in the local public schools will also be a large part of the field experience in the Emergent Literacy course starting in Fall 2015.

- Implementation of Technology Workshop. One significant gap that our curriculum mapping project identified quite early in our process had to do with preparing our candidates to use technology to engage students in learning (associated with CAEP standard 1.5). While we have a SmartBoard in our lab classroom, we realized we needed to do more to help our students learn how to utilize SmartNotebook software. A first step was to collaborate with our technology support team on campus and get SmartNotebook installed on the laptops in our classroom cart, as well as to get it installed on faculty computers. Then in the Spring 2015 semester, we enlisted a graduating senior to create and present a workshop on SmartNotebook, based on the expertise she developed in her student teaching semester. This workshop was presented primarily for our junior students, but it was open to faculty as well, many of whom attended in order gain additional experience using the software.

Plans for on-going Curriculum Mapping

Our department's curriculum mapping is an on-going process that is divided up into different phases. The work during the 2014 – 2015 academic year represents the first phase of the process that involved examining the learning goals, the courses in the major sequence, and identifying the changes needed for a more effective and reflective curriculum. We will be working on phase 2 of curriculum mapping during the coming 2015 – 2016 academic year. During this time, we will be going back to the program changes we identified in the Spring and we will discuss how these changes have become a part of our courses and the program. We will also be talking about how we can measure such learning goals through our courses, especially through course assignments. The changes that we have made in the student teaching seminar will also be examined and reflected upon for further discussion.

Another major part of the work that we will be doing in phase 2, is to examine our minor sequence courses against our department's learning goals and identify areas that we will focus on to make the sequence even stronger.

September 9, 1015

Dear Soyong,

We appreciate your excellent work on this assessment process and your planning for next year and beyond. Your department clearly made enormous strides this year in clarifying your goals and building a consensus about where in the curriculum your students are meeting your goals. That is fine work.

As before, we are responding to the department and program reports with particular attention to the ways faculty are framing goals for our students; analyzing student work directly (and also considering indirect information such as surveys and interviews) to see how well they are meeting our goals; discussing the results together; and making use of the results to change courses, requirements, and/or pedagogies. To meet the standards for accreditation, we are asked to analyze our students' work directly on a regular basis.

The key as always is to do assessment that you find meaningful. Everything lines up behind that. In your case, we know that you must also meet disciplinary standards for accreditation.

Student Learning Goals: You note that you have learning outcomes that reflect Skidmore's Goals for Student Learning and Development as well as the standards for two professional associations, TASC and CAEP. It's not entirely clear on your curriculum map where Skidmore's Goals fit in and whether you have defined goals of your own independently of TASC and CAEP.

Assessments—Direct: None this year. **Direct assessment of students' learning is expected on a regular basis.**

Assessments—Indirect: The ED faculty mapped the student learning outcomes to courses, indicating where each outcome was introduced, reinforced, and mastered in the curriculum. This is important and exemplary work.

Results:

Discussion, implementation: The process of curriculum mapping generated useful faculty conversations, including in-depth discussion of how course sequencing provides faculty opportunities to make connections across required courses. Faculty discussion during this process also identified several target areas for program improvement, including: revision of the student teaching seminar course, incorporation of field experiences earlier in the program, implementation of technology workshops, and identification of target standards for future growth.

Looking ahead: During 2015/16 you plan to review the effects of the changes you've made this year and will begin to design assessments for the learning goals in the courses. You also plan to map minor sequence courses against learning goals. We urge you to undertake at least one direct assessment of your students' work meeting a goals that you decide is particularly important.

Overall: Excellent, ambitious, and painstaking work that also seems to be useful! We look forward to seeing your plans for direct assessment, and would be happy to work with you on planning that.

Sincerely,
Sarah Goodwin, Lisa Christenson