

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

Department: **Educational Studies**

Degree or Certificate Level: **Ph.D.**

College/School: **School of Education**

Date (Month/Year): **October 1, 2022**

Primary Assessment Contact: **Kathryn Mitchell Pierce, Program Director**

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? **Spring 2022**

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? **Plan has not yet been updated (see #7D)**

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

The structure of PhD programs in the School of Education remains a central focus. The C&I faculty also serve in the Undergraduate Teacher Education Program which has been engaged in a massive redesign of the teacher certification programs, with the first cohort enrolling Fall 2022. In addition, three of the C&I faculty have program development and advising responsibilities for the new MA in Education Principles and Practices, a program primarily designed for classroom teachers, which was launched amid the profound changes brought about by the COVID pandemic. Further, three of the C&I faculty also serve in the PhD in EPE program.

Under the leadership of the outgoing Program Director, Jennifer Buehler, the C&I faculty spent much of 2021-2022 exploring ideas related to restructuring the C&I PhD to better reflect the needs of students attracted to the program, the capacity of the current faculty, and the opportunities to collaborate with other units on campus as well as P-12 schools and community organizations surrounding our urban campus.

Program assessment in Spring and September 2022 focused on:

- Outcome #4: Students will explain how learning and curriculum theories are used to develop education programs.
- Outcome #5: Graduates will be able to use oral and written communication.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

NOTE: There are no Madrid students enrolled in our program.

In Spring 2022, the Education Studies/C&I faculty reviewed an anonymized collection of student work from two semesters of EDI 6460 Curriculum Theory (Fall 2019 2021), both taught by the same instructor and both including first semester students as well as those who had completed half or most of their coursework in the PhD program. The work samples included visual models as well as excerpts from a paper outlining a personal theory and philosophy about curriculum, specifically addressing five dimensions of curriculum ideologies, with references to assigned and self-selected readings on curriculum theory. The students whose work was reviewed represented first semester PhD students as well as students who were further along in their program or near the end.

In September 2022, the combined C&I and EPE programs within Graduate Education Studies met to continue reviewing the samples of student work.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

A semi-structured protocol for “Looking at Student Work” (adapted from the National School Reform Faculty) was used to review the work in both discussions. Faculty worked first individually and then in pairs or small groups to discuss their observations and questions about implications. The first discussion included members of the C&I program faculty. The second discussion included members from both the C&I and EPE programs. Small groups reported highlights of their discussions to the whole group. Questions and implications were noted in the Zoom chat and in the Program Director’s notes. These notes were shared back with the faculty for consideration/response.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

General Results

- The work samples reflected a wide range of academic writing skills (both analytic skills as well as use of APA style) that did not seem directly related to the length of time a student had been in the program. Some first semester students demonstrated proficiency in using APA style to write a scholarly paper with in-text citations and references, indicating that they developed these skills prior to enrolling in the PhD program. Some of the more advanced students (in terms of credit hours completed) submitted work that raised serious questions about their experience and competence in such writing.
- Many students included in their paper personal references to their own P-12 education and/or classroom teaching experiences. Some students used these references to produce a more autobiographical reflection rather than to illustrate or support a point being made in the paper.
- Some students who had been in the program longer referenced sources beyond those assigned for class, demonstrating their ability to make connections across courses and to synthesize ideas.
- The design of the C&I program seems to position students well to write a “Theorization of Learning” paper as part of the Written Comprehensive Exams, while the EPE program does not have the same focus. This raised questions about the function of the “Theorization of Learning” paper in each program.
- The discussion led to thoughtful consideration of the role of rubrics in guiding and assessing student work, including the goodness of fit between the rubrics we have been using for Written Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation Proposals/Defenses and our program expectations. Further, the faculty explored the challenge of determining when student work merited “with distinction”, and how we might become more consistent in our definition of “with distinction”.

General results reinforcing program assessment from the 2021 cycle:

Gaps and weaknesses in our program

- Students arrive with uneven preparation and uneven readiness for doctoral level work.
- Some students struggle to write for a scholarly audience.

Additional topics that emerged:

As we review the applications to our programs and the career aspirations of our enrolled students, we continue to see evidence that our current program must be updated.

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

Findings:

1. A common entry course would help to provide all students the opportunity to develop the academic reading

and writing skills required in a PhD program. Such a professional seminar, already functioning in the EPE program, would provide a common place to establish the foundational expectations for analytic reading and scholarly writing. Further, such a course would help to create a stronger sense of community among our doctoral students.

- 2. Students would benefit from additional attention in coursework to the role of theoretical and conceptual models in research.** A new course with this focus is being developed for Spring 2023. Future conversations will center around whether this should become a required course and where it best fits in a student’s program. Additional conversations are needed to map courses where students will engage with theoretical and conceptual models in research.
- 3. Students would benefit from multiple opportunities to write mini-literature reviews (as noted last year), along with encouragement to read widely in the parts of the field of Education that reflect the students’ emerging sense of their place within the profession.** Additional conversations are needed to map courses where students will be engaged in deep and wide reading on particular aspects of Education.
- 4. Students are reaching the dissertation phase with uneven preparation to design and conduct independent research.** Conversations are ongoing throughout the School of Education regarding the design, content, and sequence of research courses available to students. Part of these discussions include consideration of “content” courses (courses that are not designated as Research Methods), that might also provide opportunities to look at research design and methodology as part of the wide and deep reading in the content.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

- A.** When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

These results/findings were initially addressed in the C&I faculty meetings in Spring 2022. They were further explored with the benefit of new perspectives during a combined C&I and EPE faculty meeting in September 2022.

- B.** How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you’ve initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites

- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process

- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

Based on our prior Assessment Report, we remain committed to making changes in our PhD curriculum. This work was slowed during the 2021-2022 academic year by the substantial time commitment required of our faculty for the Undergraduate Program Redesign. (NOTE: During 2021-2022, all C&I faculty had joint responsibilities in the Graduate Education Studies programs as well as the Undergraduate Teacher Education Program Redesign.)

For the 2022-2023 academic year, we will focus on our internal structures (EPE, C&I, MA) and how these interface with other SOE program areas, specifically MAT and UG Teacher Education. In addition, we will complete a proposal to revise the structure of our current PhD in C&I based on the feedback from students, student work, faculty, and area stakeholders.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

N/A

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

- Revised structure of comprehensive exams.
- Revised course content in qualitative research courses.
- Development of the Theoretical and Conceptual Models in Research course.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

Program redesign work will yield a new curriculum and a new assessment plan that takes into account program components such as interdisciplinary coursework, structured community internship, a proseminar for first year students, and other elements as we develop them.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

NA

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We are eager to develop a completed proposal for a revision of our PhD program in Education Studies.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.