

The following data and instruments informed the 2006

**Academic Program Review:  
Early Childhood Education Division  
Undergraduate Report**

- Data from UNITED system, using Iowa Initial Licensure Standards
  - Level III, Elementary Education placement
  - Level IV, Student Teaching placement
- Data from UNITED system, using Teacher Work Sample
- Survey instrument for alumni, using ED100 standards
- Drafts of CTE Diversity survey and vita formats
- Diversity Experience questionnaire used for 210:130/192 Level III placements
- Examples of informal feedback from the field

*The following Student Outcomes Assessment section of the 2006 report is in the process of being updated for the Fall 2009 Iowa Chapter 79 State Program Review.*

#### A. Routine Procedures for Measuring Student Outcomes

The ultimate university-based outcome for early childhood education majors is licensure by the state of Iowa to teach, with the ED100 endorsement entitled, “Teacher—Prekindergarten through Grade 3, including special education.” At the time of the last program review, in academic year 1998-99, the ED100 had just been implemented in the State of Iowa and the teacher education program was in the process of changing to performance-based assessment. A university-wide assessment system designed to accommodate radically new forms of assessment for all programs in teacher education is still under construction. At this time, the early childhood program is just beginning to use this system for its students, with access to data for the past two academic years assessing their progress toward meeting the Iowa Initial Teacher Licensure Standards. Tools for assessing and documenting progress toward meeting the ED100 standards are in the pilot test phase at this time.

Data were available on the performance of Early Childhood Majors for 2004 and 2005. These data consisted of evaluations of the double-major elementary education/early childhood education majors in their Level III field experience placements (elementary level) (see Table C.1.a.) and of the early childhood majors in their Level IV student teaching placement (see Table C.1.b.), and assessments of their Teacher Work Samples from their Level IV student teaching (see Table C.2.). All tables can be found in Appendix C.

Since 1999, all courses for teacher licensure have been redesigned to designate which Iowa Initial Teacher Licensure standards will be met by class objectives and their associated activities. In addition, all of the methods courses in the early childhood education major have further specified the objectives and activities designed to meet more specific standards for the ED100. At this time, completion of each course in the major and evidence of meeting the associated standards is the primary assessment device for measuring student outcomes. Guidance and Instruction is the final methods course in which the Level III field experience (210:130/192) provides a “critical performance,” which serves to meet a majority of ED100 standards. For those students who have a double major in Elementary Education, the Classroom Management course (210:120) provides an elementary Level III field experience and requires a paper-based portfolio of evidence of meeting Iowa Initial Teacher Licensure standards. And at Level IV, during the first student teaching placement, all students now produce a Teacher Work Sample as another set of “critical performance” data for licensure.

At this time a major initiative is underway to survey graduates of the undergraduate initial teacher licensure program. Two forms of the survey have been piloted on a small scale and a full-scale implementation is near at hand (see Survey Instrument for Alumni, Appendix C). We hope to have data to share with the external reviewers in spring 2007.

In the meantime, less formal sources provide information, including communications from graduates, both in person and by phone and email. An increasing number of Level III and other field experience placements are being made in classrooms headed by recent graduates of the program. Other information comes from students during their student teaching semester, and later as they apply for and obtain their first jobs.

Another ongoing study is being carried out in a collaboration between an ECE faculty member and a Department

of Teaching faculty member who supervises ECE student teachers. “Pre-service and 1st Year Teachers’ Use of Guidance Strategies” is a longitudinal study following ECE students from Level III participation through student teaching and into their first year in their own classrooms, post-licensure. When this study is completed, the data will be particularly useful for revising the Level III field experience and the coursework that prepares students to succeed in classroom management techniques.

In addition, a major area of scholarly work by at least two faculty members is the self-study of teacher education practices. Many forms of data contribute to their understanding of their own classroom practices, including interviews with students carried out by graduate assistants from outside of the College of Education, regularly scheduled Student Assessments of Instructor each term, quick feedback surveys during class time, faculty peer observations of their classrooms, and their own reflective teaching journals. In presenting these data to national and international professional audiences and in subsequent publications, these faculty members add collegial responses to the information from their students in order to improve or even redesign their courses.

## B. Important Findings

- Data from the UNITED system show that, overall, the quality of students’ work was very good. Table C.1.a. shows the results of evaluations conducted by the students’ supervising teachers during their Level III field placement (at the elementary level). Teachers rated student performance on 11 items, using a 5-point scale ranging from 5 (*Commendable*) to 1 (*Needs Improvement*). Teacher also had the option of marking an item *Not Able to Evaluate*. Overall results show that students were rated very highly by their supervising teachers. The majority of students received ratings of 4 or 5. The only item on which fewer than 50% of the students received ratings of 4 or 5 was on *Technology Application*, and on this item, almost 50% of the teachers were unable to evaluate the students.

Table C.2.b. shows the results of the evaluations conducted by the students’ supervising teachers during their Level IV student teaching placement. Teachers rated students’ performance on 14 items, using a 5-point scale ranging from 5 (*Outstanding*) to 1 (*Unsatisfactory*). Results show that the majority of students were rated very highly by their supervising teachers on all 14 items. The percentage of students who received ratings of 4 or 5 ranged from 86.6% (on *Use of Technology*) to 97.9% (on *Professional Characteristics /Personal Qualities*).

Table C.2. shows the results of the evaluations of the students’ Teacher Work Sample by the UNI faculty. The work sample is rated on a 3-point scale, where 3 is the best score and 1 reflects a non-passing score. The students receive an overall score as well as 7 subscale scores. Results are broken down by year (2004 and 2005). Results show that the quality of students’ work was very good. The mean score was well above passing for every subscale as well as for overall scores. The number of students who did not pass this critical performance was 0 in 2004 and 3 in 2005 (2.5%). The two subscales that showed the lowest performance were *Reflection and Self Evaluation*, with 3 students (4.2%) not passing in 2004 and 4 students (3.3%) not passing in 2005, and *Instructional Decision-Making*, with 6 students (8.3%) not passing in 2004 and 5 students (4.1%) not passing in 2005.

These data, although incomplete, present a positive picture of UNI Early Childhood majors. However, some caveats must be presented. Teacher reports can sometimes be unreliable. Teachers can get into response set, where they rate students highly on anything, unless something remarkably bad occurs. The percentage of students who received a rating of *Not Able to Evaluate* on the evaluation of the Level III experience were very high, ranging from over 7% to almost 50%, suggesting that teachers had some difficulty with the instrument and/or their observations of the students. Finally, the data reflect the students’ performance as *students*, rather than as teachers. It is the intent of the early childhood faculty to collect data on recent graduates. These data should be available in Spring 2007.

- Lack of preparation for diversity, particularly in special education  
During the last two accreditation visits by the state, the teacher education program as a whole has been faulted for weaknesses in the area of diversity, both in terms of recruitment and retention of students and faculty, and also in terms of preparation for teaching in their future classrooms. Although redesigning courses to meet ED100 standards directly addressed diversity in terms of disabilities, informal reports from graduates who are taking jobs in segregated special education settings indicate a desire for more detailed preparation for being the person in charge of making and implementing educational plans for

children with a wide variety of disabilities.

- Inappropriate quantitative classroom assessment tools required to be used in student teaching  
In fall term 2004 the Teacher Work Sample (TWS) became the major critical performance for meeting Iowa Initial Licensure standards across all the teacher education programs. Early childhood education student teachers being supervised by OSFE staff who were not early-childhood certified themselves have often been expected to carry out assessments of young children that violate the professional standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Especially for infant and toddler settings, some field sites came close to refusing to accept UNI students at Level III and Level IV because of these inappropriate TWS demands. In addition, ECE majors received lower scores for their TWS assessments from scorers who, like the OSFE supervisors, also lacked an understanding of alternative assessment for young children. Although some ECE preservice teachers were able to make a strong case for themselves, either in person with OSFE staff supervisors or in writing in the TWS, many others were not able to mitigate these negative outcomes.
- Lack of preparation for center-based infant and toddler programs and for home-intervention programs  
Informal sources such as personal communications from recent graduates who were hired in such positions indicated a lack of preparation in these two areas.
- Improper placements in classrooms for student teaching  
Phone calls from students being placed improperly alerted us to this problem.

### 1. Sharing of Findings

Findings derived from the data collection process are shared among program faculty through various methods. The ECE Division faculty meets 2-4 times per month. During these regularly scheduled meetings program faculty share program assessment data, student performance reports, and curricular planning proposals. The formal program review is also shared with all faculty members during one of the regularly scheduled monthly Curriculum and Instruction department meetings. Some findings have been shared with students by some faculty as they explain curricular changes designed to improve areas of weakness.

### 2. Specific Changes Made as a Result of SOA Findings

- Lack of preparation for diversity, particularly in special education  
Three faculty members have volunteered for service on the Council on Teacher Education Diversity Committee, whose charge is to work on university-wide solutions to the need to prepare our students for classrooms in which a wide variety of diversities are represented. We are piloting a diversity survey and diversity vita form to add to the UNITED computer system to track student experience and to use when making field experience placements. For the past 2 academic years, all Level III placements in Guidance and Instruction (210:130/192) have been determined with reference to an even more detailed survey of diversity experience, so that students can fill in gaps in such areas as disability, age range, race, home language, and poverty. This work also contributes to meeting the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Strategic Action Goal II: Increase diversity experiences for students through program and faculty/Objective 1/S-2: By September 2009, request all students to demonstrate within their portfolio authentic evidence of working with diverse populations with a specific focus in race/poverty/disability.
- Inappropriate quantitative classroom assessment tools required to be used in student teaching  
ECE faculty became involved in TWS scoring and contributed to Council on Teacher Education committees in charge of the TWS. We now have a faculty representative as a full member of the committee designing alternative prompts and evaluation criteria for early childhood and for special education student teaching settings. In four courses, alternative assessments are being given more explicit treatment: 200:109 changed its name to reflect a stronger orientation – Development and Assessment of Young Children; 210:151 Early Childhood Curriculum; 210:120 Infant and Toddler; and 210:130/192 Guidance and Instruction. In addition, requests by the ECE division for copies of widely used ECE assessment instruments were honored and are now available in the IRTS Curriculum Laboratory.
- Lack of preparation for center-based infant and toddler programs and for home-intervention programs  
As graduates informally relayed information about jobs they were taking in group-care settings for infants and toddlers, the Infant and Toddler class (210:120) was redesigned to distribute field experience hours so that more time was spent in center-based care arrangements. At this time, the best preparation for home intervention teaching jobs is in the early childhood special education minor, which we strongly encourage students to take if they plan to do such work.
- Improper placements in classrooms for student teaching

A faculty member has served as liaison to the Office of Student Field Experiences (OSFE) to mediate problems with student teaching placements. She has spoken to gatherings of student teaching supervisors, made overheads and handouts for them to have on hand when making placements, and encouraged students to ask her to mediate individual problems one on one. OSFE members have taken the initiative to contact her themselves in making judgments about which settings will meet the ED100 placement standard, and errors have decreased over time. However, when new OSFE supervisors are hired, rarely if ever with early childhood experience of their own, reminders usually are necessary.

#### C. Recommendations for Improvement in SOA Processes

- Survey of Alumni  
A process is underway to collect data on our EC graduates periodically in their first years of teaching to determine areas in which they experiences a lack of preparation. This work currently is in the pilot phase.
- Be more systematic in documenting less formal sources of student outcome information  
Currently individual faculty members collect these data for their own use. We intend to compile these data in a more systematic fashion.