

Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

Program(s):	M.A. in CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
Department:	Educational Studies
College/School:	School of Education
Date:	August 1, 2018
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1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

The School of Education hosted its first annual *Moving Forward Day* on October 13, 2017. The purpose of *Moving Forward Day* was to begin a regular assessment review and continuous improvement cycle. To date we have had no systematic program assessment procedures in our School or in Educational Studies at the graduate level.

Our M.A. program in **Curriculum and Instruction** is currently organized around five program learning outcomes. These outcomes were produced in February 2016 for the initial program assessment plan required by the provost's office. They were not vetted by faculty. The learning outcomes are as follows:

1. Students will explain learning and curriculum theories.
2. Students will research questions in the field of curriculum and instruction.
3. Students will analyze social justice issues in education.
4. Students will explain how learning and curriculum theories are used to develop education programs.
5. Students will use oral and written communication.

During this year's cycle, faculty members reviewed the first learning outcome: ***Students will explain learning and curriculum theories.***

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

Given that this was our first experience with *Moving Forward Day*, and given that faculty members were being introduced to the program assessment cycle for the first time, we had no graduate program data to work with—only our **Curriculum and Instruction Program Assessment Plan** accompanied by a graphic organizer to guide discussion.

The Program Assessment Plan indicates that the following artifacts will be used to assess student learning for this learning outcome: **Comprehensive Exam** and **Theme Paper**.

The plan states that accomplishment of this learning outcome will occur in the context of three courses including *Advanced Educational Psychology* (EDF 5300), *Studies in Educational Philosophy* (EDF 6100), and *Curriculum Development* (EDI 6450); that assessment will be conducted during the exam through "direct questions about learning and curriculum theories" and "indirect questions that require the student to use learning and curriculum theories as part of their answer"; and that student learning assessment data will be discussed in program meetings,

yielding annual action plans.

There are no Madrid students enrolled in our program. However, there are students enrolled in a SOE graduate satellite program that operates in Cyprus in cooperation with GCIS, the Global Center of Independent Studies.

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.

On *Moving Forward Day* we began a conversation about this student learning outcome as well as the larger design of our graduate program and the larger process of reviewing program data.

The assessment coordinator divided the Educational Studies graduate faculty into **three work groups**—one for each program area in our unit (which includes Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Foundations, and Special Education). Nine of 16 faculty members in Educational Studies participated in the **C & I work group**.

The assessment coordinator charged each faculty work group with filling in a four-column graphic organizer for the learning outcome we selected. The four columns on the chart were as follows:

- What is the **evidence** of student learning?
- What is our **analysis/interpretation** of the evidence?
- What are the **causes/reasons** for these results?
- What **actions** should we take to improve student learning?

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.

Discussion highlighted the need for **major changes in the design of our graduate program**. Faculty identified the following problems:

- Regarding our assessment artifacts, there are **two problems** with what our plan says about artifacts as they link to curriculum mapping. First, master's students do not take a comprehensive exam. Instead, they complete a theme paper and sit for an oral exam about the theme paper. There is no rubric for the theme paper, nor is there a programmatic design that ties work on the theme paper to specific courses listed in question #2 (*Advanced Educational Psychology, Studies in Educational Philosophy, and Curriculum Development*).
 - **COMMENT:** *Since a master's student theme paper could be on virtually any topic, there is no way to trace whether content learned in three designated courses is reflected in the theme paper. Furthermore, there is no requirement that all master's students take these three specific classes. Finally, there is no rubric for the theme paper. Students sit for an oral exam with a three-person committee, but since theme papers are entirely individualized, this process is not likely to yield systematic program assessment data. Faculty believe that the theme paper should be replaced with something along the lines of a thesis project, but it is unclear how that thesis project would differ from what we currently do.*
- Regarding curriculum mapping, we have **no core curriculum** for our 32-hour Master's degree program. Beyond required research classes, advising sheets leave most of the content courses in Curriculum and Instruction open. Students are required to take 3 hours from the field of Educational Psychology, 3 hours from either the field of Educational

Philosophy or History of Education, and 6 hours from a menu of elective curriculum courses. The remaining 14 hours of elective courses are chosen in consultation with the student's adviser.

- **COMMENT:** Faculty recognize that this lack of a core curriculum makes assessment of program learning outcomes difficult if not impossible: we currently have no way to ensure that students are exposed to the same course content and the same learning experiences during the coursework phase of the program. Furthermore, the mixing of required courses from Educational Foundations and Curriculum and Instruction makes it hard to see how the C & I master's degree is different from the Educational Foundations master's degree.
- Regarding curriculum, we **don't currently differentiate our C & I curriculum between the master's and the doctoral levels.** Master's and doctoral students frequently enroll in the same courses and complete the same assignments.
 - **COMMENT:** Faculty believe that we need a clearer sense of how master's degree work differs from doctoral work, and they believe we need a curriculum, accompanied by signature assignments, that makes this distinction clear.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

Under the leadership of an interim dean and a new program director in 2017-18, faculty members in Educational Studies spent the year grappling with the need to **reinvent our programs.**

This group recognizes the need to make the following major changes:

- **Revisit and revise our learning outcomes. STEPS TAKEN:** In spring 2018, the program director held individual meetings with each Educational Studies graduate faculty member. The meetings focused on each faculty member's vision for the program going forward along with their ideas about core courses and new program milestones. In fall 2018 we need to produce a set of learning outcomes that reflect faculty collaboration and clearer thinking about the C & I program's identity and our goals and purposes for students.
- **Map learning outcomes to a core curriculum. STEPS TAKEN:** In spring 2018, the program director engaged faculty members in creating a first version of roadmaps of study for each of our Educational Studies degree programs. In fall 2018 we need to revisit these roadmaps, using them to envision and plan for a clearer sequence of C & I course offerings from semester to semester and year to year.
- **Create signature assignments for core master's courses and a new culminating project for master's degree completion. STEPS TAKEN:** In summer 2018, a subgroup of the Educational Studies faculty met approximately five times to discuss student learning outcomes and corresponding signature assignments for the undergraduate teacher education program. Since these same faculty members also serve the graduate program, this architecture of student learning outcomes linked to signature assignments should serve as a model that we can adapt as we retool our graduate programs.
- **Differentiate our Educational Studies graduate programs** (Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Foundations, and Special Education) so that they are organized around distinctly different goals, purposes, outcomes, and curriculum—or else collapse/restructure these programs. **STEPS TAKEN:** In spring 2018, the program director began conversations with the newly-hired permanent dean to address this question of differentiation. That conversation will widen in fall 2018 to include the rest of the Educational Studies graduate faculty, first with an Educational Studies Curriculum Work

Group, and then with the graduate faculty as a whole.

Additional context about ongoing change: With a new permanent dean taking over leadership of the School of Education in August 2018, with a reduced number of programs in Educational Studies due to the program disestablishment process overseen by the Provost in 2016-17, and with a shifting set of Educational Studies graduate faculty members (three of whom departed at the end of the 2017-18 school year, at least one of whom will be replaced with a new hire in 2018-19) our School is ripe for change. This group recognizes the need to improve program assessment procedures as this process guides and underscores the process of creating better and stronger programs.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (*For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?*)

Moving Forward Day is a new process for the School of Education. We implemented the *Moving Forward Day* procedures during 2017-18 to address the problems we have had closing the loop.

We in Educational Studies look forward to strengthening the graduate program assessment process by forming an Educational Studies Assessment Work Group and creating a timeline for assessment procedures in the coming year as we undergo formal Program Review during the Spring 2019 semester.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.