Overview

In the spring of 2013, the Early Childhood Education program faculty (Professors Epstein, Gander, and Rouse) made use of the CLASSE (Classroom Survey of Student Engagement) as a tool to help assess student reaction to and involvement in learning activities in six courses:

- ECE 316 - Early Care and Administration of Early Childhood Programs
- ECE 324 - Curriculum and Assessment: Infant/Toddler through Preschool
- ECE 326 - Curriculum and Assessment: Kindergarten
- ECE 430 - Creative Experiences for Young Children: Art, Drama, Music, and Movement
- ECE 440 - Language and Literacy Development of Young Children
- ECE 490 - Relationships with Children, Families, and Professionals

The goal of this project was to help the faculty members access student responses to help understand the impact of their individual courses and gain insight into the role each course plays in the promotion of the six programmatic outcomes. Each instructor received individual reports related to the courses and the program received a summary report related to the program outcomes.

Early Childhood Education Program “Strand” Goals

The Early Childhood Program is designed to provide students with the skills to use:
1. Developmentally appropriate technology with young children.
2. Formative and summative assessment to document children’s progress and learning (i.e. data driven instruction)
3. Anti-bias curriculum including multi-cultural issues and partnering with families who have diverse backgrounds
4. Developmentally appropriate guidance strategies for young children
5. Integration of art, music, drama, and movement into curriculum
6. Collaboration among teachers (e.g. Professional Learning Communities)

The CLASSE is an adapted version of the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) to collect information about particular impacts of course structure and student response to those elements of their classes. For more information about incorporating CLASSE into your course, please contact Patrick Barlow in CATL.

Results

The overall mean scores for the program strands (see chart below) indicated a need to refine our curriculum to better address them. There were many insights gained at the individual course level as well. The ability to see the items laid out into quadrants (see example below) was of value and we are continuing to see how to address this information.

Insights and Next Steps (continued)

Specific to Addressing Technology Issues

- We plan to review a position paper authored by the National Association for the Education Young Children to help students understand appropriate use of technology for children birth through K in contrast to children in 1st through 5th grade.
- We will identify high quality iPad apps and plan implementation into relevant courses.

Related Specifically to Assessment

- Discuss with our students the current WI achievement tests in Field courses (EDS 402 and ECE 327).
- Define assessment more clearly in ECE 326 and ECE 440 and then emphasize appropriate use of authentic and standardized assessments.

Issues for the other Program Strands

- We will continue to monitor our ability promote the other program “strands” including anti-bias curriculum, partnering with families from diverse backgrounds, integrating creative arts, implementing appropriate guidance strategies, and professional collaboration.

Insights and Next Steps

Overall Insights

- What was important to us was not always important to students (for example, group work in ECE 440).
- It is important to talk with students about essential learning outcomes both at the beginning of and throughout the semester.
- Being open to learning from rather than being defensive about the results from the survey placed us in a good position to move forward with making improvements.

Faculty rankings of the level of importance of the same activities were combined with the student ratings to produce a quadrant analysis. Course level reports and an overall summary report were also constructed.

Description of CLASSE

The CLASSE is an adapted version of the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) which is used at the classroom level that was developed to gather information on behaviors and experiences tied to the promotion of learning.

CLASSE provides an opportunity for faculty and students to rate the degree to which specific aspects of instruction are implemented. Faculty and students consider engagement activities, cognitive skills, classroom atmosphere, and other educational practices. For example, both rate the degree to which classroom assignments in which “theories or concepts are applied to practical problems or new situations”.

CLASSE has been used by UW-L faculty in three different programs to date (Modern Foreign Language, Mathematics, and Early Childhood Education) to collect information about particular impacts of course structure and student response to those elements of their classes. For more information about incorporating CLASSE into your course, please contact Patrick Barlow in CATL.

Study Frequency/Agreement (Student Ratings) graph:

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Insights and Next Steps (continued)

Overall Mean Ratings on ECE Program Goals

- Technology
- Assessment
- Arts
- Integration
- Professional
- Collaboration
- Anti-Bias
- Curriculum
- Guidance
- Strategy

3.31
3.5
3.5
3.5
2.98
2.84
2.8
2.56

Technology
Assessment
Arts
Integration
Professional
Collaboration
Anti-Bias
Curriculum
Guidance
Strategy