

Early Care and Education Matters: A Conceptual Model for Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Integrating the Key Constructs of Knowledge, Reflection, and Practice

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There has been a great deal of discourse in the field of early care and education concerning the experiences, skills, competencies, and education level needed by early childhood teachers to ensure that quality teaching and learning take place in the early years. The purpose of this article is to describe an early childhood teacher preparation program developed by a Child and Family Development Department at a large, urban, state-funded university in the hopes that we can further the discourse on how the field can ensure quality teaching and learning in both ECE and university classrooms. We propose a conceptual model that is built around three key constructs: knowledge, reflection, and practice and describe our approach to preparing early childhood educators. Using qualitative data from student reflections and course syllabi and quantitative data on the experiences and perceptions of graduating seniors, we hope to present promising practices in early childhood teacher education and provide support for our contention that the quality of early childhood teacher education matters.

Introduction

The benefits of high-quality early experiences on young children's developmental outcomes have been well documented (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; National Research Council [NRC], 2001; NRC & Institute of Medicine 2002; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001; Schweinhart, 2004; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Heckman (2011) noted that because the early years are the most critical, the provision of high-quality early care and education (ECE) can yield the highest rate of return to human capital investment, and high quality ECE programs are essential if we are to close the well-documented achievement gap (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, & Dawson, 2004; Henry, Gordon, Henderson, & Ponder, 2003; King, 2006; Reynolds et al., 2001; Schulman, 2005; Schulman & Barnett, 2005; Schweinhart et al., 2005). Findings from the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) indicated that when young children are exposed to high-quality instructional interactions with teachers, they develop

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academic, language, and social competencies (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2007). However, while research clearly demonstrates the benefits of high-quality early experiences on children's developmental outcomes and on how well they perform in school, empirical evidence also indicates that low-quality ECE programs can contribute to poor developmental outcomes and, in some cases, can be harmful to children (Burchinal et al., 2000; Howes, 1997; Love et al., 2003; National Institute of Children Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005).

Not surprisingly, then, there has been considerable discourse in the field of ECE concerning the experiences, skills, competencies, and education level needed by early childhood teachers to ensure that quality teaching and learning take place in the early years (Bogard, Traylor, & Takanishi, 2008; Bornfreund, 2011; Calderon, 2005; Early et al., 2007; Fuller, Livas, & Bridges, 2006; Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009). In their book, *The Pre-K Debates: Current Controversies and Issues*, Zigler, Gilliam, and Barnett (2011) frame this debate in terms of teacher credentials versus competencies and supports and present differing viewpoints as to the kind of teacher preparation, in terms of credentials, education, and ongoing support, that should be required for early childhood teachers.

The teacher credentials side of the debate is based on research indicating that the quality of care and instruction children receive is higher when teachers have a BA degree than when they do not (Burchinal, Cryer, Clifford, & Howes, 2002) and that teachers with more training in child development are more sensitive and interact less harshly with children (Howes, 1997). Other research has shown that children demonstrate better outcomes when teachers have higher education levels (Clarke-Stewart, Vandell, Burchinal, O'Brien, & McCartney, 2002; Howes, Whitebook, & Phillips, 1992; Weaver, 2002), and the highly successful Perry Preschool Project (Schweinhart et al., 2005) and the Abecedarian Project (Campbell et al. 2002) employed teachers with BA degrees or higher. This evidence has led the Head Start program, the nation's largest child development program serving children at risk, to move toward requiring that 50% of teachers have a BA degree by 2013 as a means of improving program quality (Head Start Act, 2007). In addition, The National Academy of Science Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001) and others (Barnett, Hustedt, Friedman, Boyd, & Ainsworth, 2007; NRC, 2001; Trust for Early Education, 2004) have advised that children should be taught by a teacher with a BA degree that includes education related specifically to early childhood.

The other side of the debate, which proposes that a 4-year degree may not be a necessary ingredient for high-quality ECE programs, is based on more recent studies that point to mixed or contradictory findings on the impact of teacher education on program quality and child outcomes. Early et al. (2006) reported relationships between teacher education level and student gains in math but not in other domains. In their examination of a large data set from seven major studies on early care and education, Early, Maxwell, Burchinal, and colleagues (2007) reported null and contradictory findings regarding the relationships between classroom quality, child educational outcomes, and the education level and degree of teachers. These findings led the researchers to conclude that policy focused exclusively on increasing teacher education level may not be enough to enhance classroom quality or improve child outcomes. Drawing on this work, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers have begun to examine the quality of support and ongoing training provided to teachers already in the classroom as well as the quality of 4-year degree programs aimed at educating preservice teachers. This article will focus on this latter research, as we support the contention of Whitebook et al. (2009), who assert that simply knowing that a teacher has a BA degree tells little about the quality or content of coursework or fieldwork experience that

helps students bridge the theory to practice gap and gain experience with children and families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including children with disabilities. Teachers are at the heart of teaching and learning, and we believe that the question of whether teacher preservice education matters is a rhetorical one: Of course it matters.

Teacher Education Matters

We will build our thesis around the first hypothesis proposed by Whitebook and colleagues (2009) in their policy report *Preparing Teachers of Young Children: The Current State of Knowledge, and a Blueprint for the Future*: that both the content and the method of delivery of an educational degree influence teacher practices. In order to provide high-quality early childhood programs, we need to agree that teachers engaged in early care and education need rigorous, high-quality educational programs that are specifically designed to teach them to provide positive, relationship- and play-based environments and interactions that support developmental outcomes of young children (Barnett, 2011; Bornfreund, 2011; Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009). The challenge facing the field is not just whether a teacher has a 4-year degree, but rather how we can develop teacher education programs that have a strong theoretical foundation and reflect best practices in the field. As noted by Whitebook et al. (2009), focusing solely on whether a teacher has a BA degree is a reductive approach to the very complex issues of teacher preparation, program quality, and child outcomes.

The purpose of this article is to describe promising practices from a Child and Family Development (CFD) Program within the College of Education at a large, urban, state-funded university in the hopes that we can further the discourse on how the field can ensure quality teaching and learning in both ECE and university classrooms. Using qualitative data from student reflections and course syllabi and quantitative outcome data on the experiences and perceptions of graduating students, we will make the case that just as quality education matters for young children, quality educational experiences for ECE teachers are essential if the field is to live up to the promise of early care and education. As noted by Whitebook et al. (2009), policy and practice decisions cannot wait for “perfect” studies to be completed, and this article represents our best efforts to date to design and implement a quality early childhood teacher preparation program that is based on both research and recommendations from the field. Our goal in this paper is to detail our attempts to build a core curriculum and program of study that supports the development of knowledgeable, skilled, and passionate early childhood educators.

In order to delineate the points that we wish to make about our program, we will discuss our work in terms of the seven core elements of exemplary programs suggested by Darling-Hammond (2006). As a result of her study of seven K–12 teacher preparation programs that had been nominated as exemplary by prominent teacher educators, Darling-Hammond describes the following as distinguishing markers of high-quality teacher education programs: (a) a common, clear, vision of good teaching that creates a coherent set of learning experiences in both coursework and field placements; (b) well-defined standards of professional practice and performance that are used to guide and evaluate coursework and clinical work; (c) a strong core curriculum taught in the context of practice, and grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development and learning, social and cultural contexts, curriculum, assessment, and subject matter pedagogy; (d) extended clinical experiences, carefully chosen to support the ideas presented in closely connected coursework; (e) extensive use of case methods, teacher research, performance assessments, and portfolio evaluation applying learning to real problems of practice; (f) explicit strategies to help

students confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students, and learn about the experiences of people different from themselves; and (g) strong relationships, common knowledge, and shared beliefs among school- and university-based faculty jointly engaged in transforming teaching, schooling, and teacher education. While these recommendations have been culled from research on K–12 teacher preparation programs, we believe that, because they encompass many of the policy recommendations made by others (see Bornfreund, 2011; Whitebook et al., 2009) specific to ECE, they are also applicable to the field of ECE and to the discourse on effective program models for the preparation of early childhood teachers. As such, they provide an appropriate framework for concretizing our practices and philosophy of effective teaching and learning in the ECE setting.

Who We Are

The focus of our department is on the study of social emotional development as the underlying foundation for all other areas of development, an approach that is often missing in post-NCLB educational settings. All of our courses reflect a nested, lifespan approach, in which the child develops in the context of the family, community, culture, and public policy. Developmentally appropriate practice is an integral part of our educational philosophy and our department's emphasis on intervention and prevention prepares students with hands-on experiences through community-based learning. We are committed to the use of evidence-based and innovative practices to promote school readiness outcomes for all children, including dual language learners and children with disabilities. Our program reflects our model (see Figure 1) that is built around three key constructs: knowledge, reflection, and practice.

Our faculty's expertise reflects our nested model, as they have expertise in the areas of social-emotional development, family dynamics, administration and public policy, early childhood teacher education, cultural and linguistic diversity, prevention and intervention, violence prevention, and school bullying.

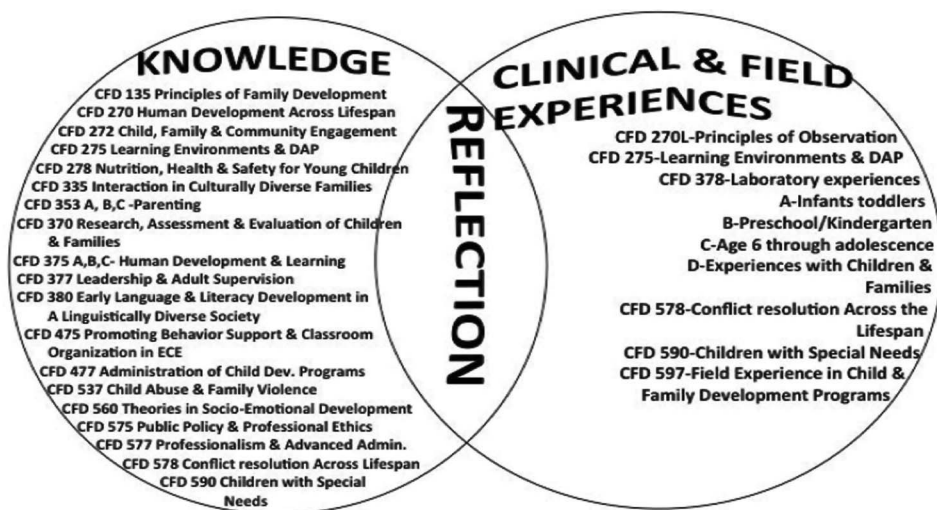


Figure 1. Our program model.

Our Work: Reflecting the Seven Core Elements

In order to illustrate how our work reflects the seven core elements proposed by Darling-Hammond (2006), we have selected courses that we suggest best reflect each of these elements. Data from course syllabi, student reflections, and exit surveys will be used to describe what we believe to be a model of an effective early childhood teacher preparation program.

Darling-Hammond's (2006) first recommendation calls for a shared vision of good teaching. According to Darling-Hammond, good teaching or "teaching quality" has two important elements. On the one hand, teachers need to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to deliver high-quality instruction to a wide range of students. Creating this kind of high "teacher quality" prepares teachers to teach effectively, but does not guarantee it. On the other hand, teachers must also be aware of and engage in early childhood policies that impact the teaching contexts in which they work. As Darling-Hammond points out, you can prepare a highly effective teacher, but if the teaching environment is not supportive of the teacher's practices then learning and instruction will be compromised (2012).

In CFD, the faculty worked collaboratively to construct a common, coherent vision for preparing early childhood educators and professionals in which both elements of teaching quality are addressed. Our vision for high *teacher quality* is reflected in our Department Vision Statement:

The Child and Family Development (CFD) Department prepares early childhood educators and professionals who value and are committed to promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 8; the importance of implementing curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, evidence-based, comprehensive, and culturally and linguistically responsive; the significance of high-quality teacher-child relationships for learning and development; and, the experience of child development within the lifespan continuum.

The CFD program of study has been designed to support high teacher quality by aligning course instruction, assessment, and field experiences with national standards in early childhood professional preparation (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] Standards for Initial Professional Preparation Programs 1–4 and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE] Unit Standards). Students in the program gain in-depth knowledge of appropriate curriculum and assessment practices from birth to age 8, thereby learning to effectively design high-quality instruction in a range of learning contexts, including inclusive and diverse settings.

The CFD Vision Statement also addresses Darling-Hammond's (2006) second element of teaching quality that states that teachers need to be prepared to be knowledgeable, critical, and reflective about the educational practices and policies in their communities. NAEYC refers to this set of skills as "becoming a professional" (Standard 6). Our Vision Statement addresses the importance of preparing early childhood professionals:

The Child and Family Development (CFD) Department prepares early childhood educators and professionals to construct supportive linkages between families, school, communities, and public policy and to teach individuals so that the uniqueness of their experience, culture and developmental differences are addressed.

Several courses in the CFD program of study focus specifically on preparing students to become early childhood professionals. In CFD 575, Public Policy and Professional Ethics, students learn about key policies in early childhood as well as how public policies are developed. Through writing assignments and debates, students demonstrate basic advocacy skills, including verbal and written communication with other professionals around key issues. For example, in the Critical Issues/Advocacy Project, students write a data-driven policy brief on an early childhood educational issue and prepare a letter to their senator advocating for their position. Students also take two administration courses: CFD 377, Adult Supervision in CFD Programs and CFD 477, Administration of Child Development Programs. In these two courses, students have opportunities to examine and analyze ethical issues using NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct and to become familiar with program administration and how their own philosophies can impact practice. Comments from one early childhood teacher candidate illustrate how coursework has impacted her professional development:

I gained insight into valuable areas of the field, such as parent relationships and leadership skills. I feel like I grew as a person, because the main project for the course really generated a lot of self-reflection.

Standards of Professional Practice

Darling-Hammond's (2006) second recommendation calls for a standards-based system of teacher preparation that guides coursework, assessment, and field experience. Research shows that increases in student achievement can be connected, in large part, to teachers who are trained in accordance with well-defined teaching standards (McRobbie, 2000). The CFD Department's program of study is aligned with the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (2010). These standards have provided the CFD faculty with a nationally recognized framework for developing a shared vision of our educational goals.

Evidence of program quality is determined not just by the number of students who successfully complete the program; rather, evidence of program quality focuses on expected student performance and on assessments of student work. To ensure a focus on student performance, the CFD faculty have: (a) aligned students' coursework and field experiences with standards, (b) designed key assessments that measure students' performance, (c) collected and aggregated data on key assessments, and (d) analyzed the data on student performance to improve program instruction.

One way in which the CFD faculty aligns instruction with standards is by including a table aligning NAEYC standards with course objectives and assessments in each course syllabus. In addition, the faculty collectively selected eight "signature" assessments from the CFD program that serve as our key indicators for student performance. Each assessment is tied to a detailed rubric, and data are entered for each student's rubric every semester, allowing us to analyze data as part of continuous improvement.

The CFD Department has improved its system for evaluating student performance in the last year by including teacher performance evaluations. These are referred to as "summative evaluations" and occur twice during a student's field experience placement (midterm and final). The summative evaluations measure students' effectiveness in guiding children's learning but also provide our students with support for it at the same time (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Comments from individual students' field experience reflect students' strengths and challenges in the field:

Over the past 12 weeks, I have learned many great practices when it comes to early childhood development. I learned that by observing the children you can create and instill developmentally appropriate practices and curriculum based on their needs. . . . I would definitely follow the children's lead when it comes to coming up with curriculum and developmentally appropriate practices. I've worked at public school CDC's and noticed a big difference between [our campus] Children's Center. What I've learned from [our campus] Children's Center I will take with me for my future work in early childhood education.

I have learned more about how to create developmentally appropriate activities in the classroom by observing how the mentor teachers instructed the children.

I learned that class time should be focused on the relationships amongst children and their friends and teachers as well as their ability to communicate.

Core Curriculum Taught in the Context of Practice

This recommendation calls for a robust core curriculum that is grounded in knowledge of best practices in the field with guidance from experienced and trained mentors and supervising teachers. As part of their program of study, students majoring in Child and Family Development are required to have internships that provide them with practical field experience and allow them to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. The following quote exemplifies this integrated model and the effect on students' learning:

Through courses offered in the Child and Family Development, I had the opportunity to work with (young) children while their parents were taking parenting classes, mandated by court and also to develop and implement bullying-related curriculum in middle schools. These opportunities were extremely beneficial as an undergraduate student for several reasons. For example, it allowed me the opportunity to witness how the topics covered in class (milestones in development, conflict resolution tactics, school bullying prevalence, etc.) were useful and implemented in the "real world." That is, it made the information presented in class resonate at a deeper level because I knew that much of it would be useful later in the week with my off-campus opportunities.

This quote exemplifies our commitment to the nested model of development and development across the lifespan. Our CFD 275 course, Learning Environments and Developmentally Appropriate Practice, is designed to give early childhood education teacher candidates the opportunity to spend 45 hours working in an assigned classroom in our campus Children's Center. Students work closely with a master teacher who models appropriate practices, reviews student's lesson plans, and mentors them throughout the semester. As part of this course, students are required to create an integrated curriculum unit that is aligned with the NAEYC program standards and builds on children's personal interests and prior knowledge. Learning goals and assessments are built around the state's infant toddler and preschool learning foundations and assessment system, thus preparing students for the educational system that they will most likely join upon graduation. Particular attention is paid in this course to meeting the needs of dual language learners and children from diverse backgrounds and communities.

Student reflections on their experience at the lab school reflect the value of this opportunity to bridge theory and practice and of using the state assessment tool to develop lesson plans:

This was an amazing experience and the internship was extremely relevant to the class. It was nice to be able to see what we talk about in class happen right before my eyes. I have a new perspective on childcare, feel way more comfortable with doing DRDP's and lesson plans, and get really encouraged when I see how interested and excited kids are about learning.

Another student shared her insight on the importance of intentional curriculum and the impact the experience had on her career goals:

A lot of people think it is just changing diapers and playing with play dough, but in reality it is just like elementary and high school. The younger ones have a specific curriculum, too, and it is carefully planned. Unlike in high school where there are standards and themes, we go by what the children are interested in and at the same time implement educational standards. This experience has opened my eyes to the job I am going into, and it made me realize that I am in the right career and want to work with toddlers.

Data from exit surveys completed by graduating seniors from the last 2 years (see table addressing all exit survey items in Appendix), detail students' perceptions of the rigor of coursework and its relevance to current practice in the field. Survey data were completed by a total of 78 students across the 2 years and each question was rated on a scale of 1–4, with 4 indicating the highest level of satisfaction (see Table 1). Students expressed a high

Table 1
Student Perceptions of Coursework ($N = 78$)

Question	Semester									
	Spring 2011					Spring 2012				
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>N</i>
How demanding was the coursework in your program?	3.38	0.57	2	4	53	3.78	0.42	3	4	23
How relevant was the content of your coursework to current practices in the field?	3.55	0.64	1	4	53	3.88	0.45	2	4	24
How satisfied are you with the content of coursework in your program?	3.35	0.63	1	4	53	3.83	0.38	3	4	24

degree of satisfaction with our program, and the satisfaction level increased from one year to the next.

Clinical Experiences and Applying Learning to Real Problems of Practice

Darling-Hammond (2006) also recommends that students have the opportunity to participate in extended clinical experiences that are closely connected to coursework and use case methods, teacher research, and assessments of performance to assist students with the application of theory to real problems of practice. Our 378 A, B, and C classes give students the opportunity to work at the campus children's center with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers and to work in elementary schools and other school-based settings serving elementary school students. Students are supervised by the master teacher, who provides ongoing feedback and mentoring throughout the semester. In CFD 378 D, Laboratory Experiences with Children and Families, and CFD 578, Conflict Resolution Across the Lifespan, students intern in a variety of community settings and receive on-site supervision and mentoring. For example, students work at a storefront night shelter serving homeless youth and are trained to work with a diverse population while learning mediation, supervision, and crisis counseling skills. Students also work at a program that provides supervised visitation for children and their parents who have experienced trauma associated with family conflict. As they learn evidence-based practices in trauma-informed care in their coursework, they plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities for children aged birth to 17 years at schools, clinics, and social service agencies in the community. CFD 380, Language and Literacy in a Diverse Society, incorporates a field experience in which students are assigned a child to work with at a local Head Start center. Students are responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of language and literacy activities and lessons designed to meet the child's interests and developmental level. Students are encouraged to work with dual-language learners and children with special needs, and the following student reflection on their experiences highlights the benefits of this approach and exemplifies typical student feedback:

My main goal was for him to talk in English or Spanish, as long as he talked we could work from there. I noticed that he liked cars and trains a lot, so I decided to do an activity that involved that. I started to ask questions in Spanish and he started to answer, not to all of them but he answered to some. After a while we started to focus more on one train in the book and we decided to build one. As the weeks progressed Fernando started talking more to everyone. I actually was proud of myself, because he did improve and I helped in that improvement.

Whitebook *et al.* (2009) noted that coursework aimed at preparing students to work with children with disabilities is often taught by general education teachers who lack training and expertise in special education. In our department, CFD 590 is taught by a clinical psychologist who has a child with a disability, allowing him to provide additional depth and understanding of the subject matter. Students from the course are required to participate in a lab experience in which they work one on one with a child with a disability and reflections from the course are generally like the following:

Anyone can read a textbook, but life isn't textbook. You are given a real glimpse inside what you have been reading about in textbooks and having discussions on in class.

Table 2
Satisfaction With Field Experience/Practicum Placements ($N = 78$)

Question	Semester									
	Spring 2011					Spring 2012				
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>N</i>
How would you rate the community-based field experiences/practicum placements offered through your program?	3.26	0.72	1	4	53	3.87	0.34	3	4	23
How would you rate the guidance you received from practicum supervisors?	3.15	0.72	2	4	53	3.78	0.52	2	4	23

Exit data from seniors graduating in 2011 and 2012 indicate that they were highly satisfied with their field experiences, as indicated by survey data presented in Table 2 (see Appendix for complete presentation of exit survey data).

On the spring 2012 survey, 20 students responded to an open-ended question asking what experience had the greatest impact on them while in the program. Thirteen of the 20 (65%) graduating seniors responded that it was the field experiences that had the greatest impact; 5 (20%) claimed program content; 3 (15%) claimed faculty and/or staff.

Focus on Reflection and Diversity

Darling-Hammond (2006) describes a focus on reflection and diversity as the provision of explicit strategies that help students confront their own, often unconscious, beliefs and assumptions about learning, and about the experiences of people that may be different than themselves. Together with CFD 560, Theories of Social Emotional Development, where students are required to use critical theory to examine how social justice issues such as prejudice, discrimination, oppression, power, and privilege affect individual and group development, students use reflection as a means to acknowledge their own positionality and their own process of socialization so that they can discern how this impacts the children and families that they work with or will be working with in the future. The following quote reflects typical student feedback as to the impact of this course:

I am more prepared because I am more conscious of diversity; I'm definitely more aware of social dynamics based on race; Whether I am the minority/majority group compared to others I am working with, I have a better vision as to how to work with various populations.

When asked to reflect on their experiences with diversity, student survey data indicated high levels of satisfaction with the program (see Table 3).

Table 3
Student Perceptions of Diversity ($N = 78$)

Question	Semester									
	Spring 2011					Spring 2012				
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	<i>N</i>
How well were relevant examples related to diversity (hypothetical or from experience) used as teaching tools in your program?	3.19	0.71	1	4	53	3.83	0.38	3	4	24
How would you rate faculty in their ability to present a wide range of perspectives related to diversity?	3.19	0.59	2	4	53	3.88	0.34	3	4	24
Overall, did you find your program a safe and welcoming place to discuss issues of diversity?	3.61	0.53	2	4	53	3.96	0.21	3	4	23

Strong Community Linkages

Darling-Hammond's (2006) final recommendation calls for the creation of strong relationships based on common knowledge and shared beliefs among school and university faculty. Because of our nested design and the intersection of home, school, and community, we partner with various organizations, including schools, to include in our courses placements such as at a school district program for expectant and parenting teens and a health center that provides screening, assessment and follow-up services to children ages 0–5. Students may also work with teachers, counselors, and families on violence-prevention programs addressing bullying, anger management and social problem-solving skills, and the influence of domestic violence on children. Students may also work with the public assistance office and have the opportunity to learn about social service programs and work with clients receiving public assistance. As interns, they conduct welfare-to-work orientations and assist employment and training advisors as they work with clients towards self-sufficiency. They have also helped format a screening questionnaire (Pediatric Symptoms Checklist) that is now used by pediatricians and other health professionals in the county to improve the recognition and treatment of psychosocial problems in children. With students placed in a variety of community settings, they have helped facilitate system-change as training and protocol procedures are discussed among staff from different agencies (Child Welfare, Public Health, Education, Law Enforcement).

Conclusion

Our program is built upon a core model involving knowledge, experience, and reflection. The course assignments, assessments and field experiences are designed to support national

standards for preparing early childhood professionals and the curriculum provides students with knowledge of best practices to work with young children and families in the community. We believe that this model provides the foundation for quality teaching and learning in both university and ECE classrooms. Next steps will include collecting and analyzing outcome data on our students' practices once they enter the classroom and on the effects these practices have on child outcomes. The CFD program represents an exciting trend in university-based early childhood teacher education programs. The traditional model of ECE teacher education, in which programs of study are largely comprised of unrelated courses, has proven to be insufficient for training high-quality teachers. The CFD program has worked towards creating a stronger, more coherent model for early childhood teacher education. In this model, field experiences are closely integrated with coursework, faculty pedagogies link theory and practice, and faculty and field experience supervisors build close mentoring relationships with preservice teachers to model good teaching. A rigorous program of study combined with high levels of support, such as that offered in the CFD program, will help to strengthen the effectiveness of ECE teacher graduates, and as such the ECE profession as a whole.

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Appendix

Complete Exit Survey Likert-Item Responses

Question topics	Question	Semester														
		Spring 2011						Spring 2012						Grand total		
		Mean	SD	Min	Max	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N	Mean	SD			Min
Diversity	How well were relevant examples related to diversity (hypothetical or from experience) used as teaching tools in your program?	3.19	0.71	1	4	53	3.83	0.38	3	4	24	3.41	0.69	1	4	77
	How would you rate faculty in their ability to present a wide range of perspectives related to diversity?	3.19	0.59	2	4	53	3.88	0.34	3	4	24	3.40	0.61	2	4	77
	Overall, did you find your program a safe and welcoming place to discuss issues of diversity?	3.61	0.53	2	4	53	3.96	0.21	3	4	23	3.72	0.48	2	4	76
Coursework	Overall, how well do you think issues of diversity were addressed in your program?	3.33	0.65	2	4	53	3.83	0.38	3	4	24	3.49	0.62	2	4	77
	How demanding was the coursework in your program?	3.38	0.57	2	4	53	3.78	0.42	3	4	23	3.51	0.55	2	4	76
	How relevant was the content of your coursework to current practices in the field?	3.55	0.64	1	4	53	3.88	0.45	2	4	24	3.65	0.60	1	4	77
(Continued)																

(Continued)

(Continued)

Question topics		Semester														
		Spring 2011						Spring 2012						Grand total		
		Mean	SD	Min	Max	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N	Mean	SD			Min
Field experience	How satisfied are you with the content of coursework in your program?	3.35	0.63	1	4	53	3.83	0.38	3	4	24	3.51	0.60	1	4	77
	How would you rate the community-based field experiences/practicum placements offered through your program?	3.26	0.72	1	4	53	3.87	0.34	3	4	23	3.45	0.69	1	4	76
	How would you rate the guidance that you received from your practicum supervisors?	3.15	0.72	2	4	53	3.78	0.52	2	4	23	3.34	0.72	2	4	76
	How well did program faculty use technology (e.g., e-mail, Blackboard, text, Skype) to communicate with you?	3.40	0.57	2	4	53	3.63	0.71	1	4	24	3.47	0.62	1	4	77
Technology	How would you rate program faculty's ability to integrate technology to support instruction?	3.40	0.60	2	4	53	3.79	0.41	3	4	24	3.52	0.58	2	4	77
	How would you rate the technological resources available to you within your program?	3.08	0.76	1	4	53	3.79	0.41	3	4	24	3.30	0.75	1	4	77

Collaboration	How satisfied are you with the instruction that you received related to collaboration with other professionals, families, and agencies?	3.31	0.70	1	4	53	3.83	0.49	2	4	23	3.47	0.68	1	4	76
Respect	Did other students in your program treat you with respect?	3.72	0.57	1	4	53	3.92	0.28	3	4	24	3.78	0.50	1	4	77
	Did the faculty and staff in your program treat you with respect?	3.81	0.52	1	4	53	4.00	0.00	4	4	24	3.87	0.44	1	4	77
Overall program	How well do you think program faculty delivered clear information about program expectations, requirements, policies and procedures?	3.55	0.54	2	4	53	3.79	0.51	2	4	24	3.62	0.54	2	4	77
	Overall, how well did your program prepare you to begin working as a professional in your field?	3.28	0.69	1	4	53	3.71	0.55	2	4	24	3.42	0.68	1	4	77
	Overall, how would you rate your total experience in your academic program?	3.55	0.61	1	4	53	3.92	0.28	3	4	24	3.66	0.55	1	4	77
Faculty	How well do you think program faculty provided appropriate support and accommodations to you that facilitated your academic progress?	3.45	0.67	1	4	53	3.96	0.20	3	4	24	3.61	0.61	1	4	77
	How would you rate program faculty in their ability to mentor and support you in making informed academic and professional decisions?	3.47	0.58	2	4	53	3.88	0.34	3	4	24	3.60	0.55	2	4	77
	Overall, how would you rate the instructional skill of the faculty in your program?	3.61	0.53	2	4	53	3.96	0.20	3	4	24	3.72	0.48	2	4	77

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