Masters in Exceptional Student Education (VE)  
(Academic Degree Program and Campus)  
MA  
(Degree Level) 

2002-2003  
(Assessment Period Covered)  
11/03/03  
(Date Submitted) 

Planning Instructions:
Identify at least three student learning outcomes and complete the following portions of this plan. Student learning outcomes are defined in terms of what students will know, or be able to do, or believe as a result of instruction. The completed plan is e-mailed to Oaplans@acad.usf.edu

Students in the MA program enter as professional teachers; therefore, the overall goals of the MA program are to expand knowledge in professional areas of interest, develop reflective skills that will promote life-long learning, develop and extend knowledge about conducting research, and acquire competence in systematic inquiry (gathering, integrating and applying information in the professional literature).

Reporting Instructions:
At the end of the assessment period, the assessment report is prepared and e-mailed to: Oareports@acad.usf.edu The report contains a summary of assessment findings identified. In addition, the report describes what changes (if any) were made as a result of a review of assessment findings. The discussion on use of results should, at the very least, indicate that faculty members reviewed the assessment findings.

Student Learning Outcome #1

What will students know or be able to do or believe? Be specific.

Students will demonstrate proficiency in reflection that promotes lifelong learning.
ASSESSMENT PLAN - The completed assessment plan is e-mailed to Oaplans@acad.usf.edu at the beginning of the assessment period.

It is recommended that two means of assessment be prepared for each student learning outcome. One means of assessment may be sufficient.

Means of Assessment #1:
In their final semester, students will submit a comprehensive portfolio demonstrating their mastery in five skill areas (assessment, instruction, collaboration, classroom management, and systematic inquiry) and five domains of practice (ethical practice, affirming of diversity, reflective practice, competence in their knowledge, and use of technology). Each skill area contains a narrative reflection describing what they knew before starting the program, what they know now as a result of completing the program, and how they have or will apply what they have learned in their classroom practice. Reflections will be analyzed to determine whether the candidate was skilled in reflecting upon and altering his/her behavior as a result of their reflective process.

Criteria for Success: Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.
85% of the graduates will demonstrate that, based on their reflections, their teaching behaviors have changed during their graduate studies.

Means of Assessment #2: Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.
In their final semester, students will submit a comprehensive portfolio demonstrating their mastery in five skill areas (assessment, instruction, collaboration, classroom management, and systematic inquiry) and five domains of practice (ethical, affirming of diversity, reflective, competent, and user of technology). In addition, students must include their teaching philosophy and an autobiographical statement that addresses what they believe about education in general, why they want to be Special Education teachers, and what their goals are for their professional career. Teaching philosophies and autobiographies will be analyzed to determine whether the candidates can articulate the connections between their own personal experiences and their teaching beliefs and behaviors.

Criteria for Success: Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.
85% of the graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the influences their early educational experiences have had on their current beliefs and behaviors.

Measure: Rubric
**ASSESSMENT REPORT** - These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: Oareports@acad.usf.edu

**Findings:** What findings resulted from assessment activities?

Students are required to include an autobiographical statement and philosophy of education addressing the following three questions: What do you believe about education in general? Why do you want to be a Special Education teacher? What are your goals for your professional career? In addition, students are required to submit a narrative addressing the following three questions: What did you know before starting this program? What do you know now as a result of this program? How are you or will you apply what you have learned? Students were able to adequately respond to the questions listed. They were able to demonstrate competency in their ability to reflect upon and alter their behavior based upon their narratives. Eighty nine percent of the students received a score of 3 or higher on their autobiographical statement and philosophy of education. Seventy eight percent of the students obtained scores of three or higher on their domain narratives. Narratives were scored independently by two faculty members using a rubric.

**Use of Results:** What changes, if any, were made in response to the findings? This section should indicate that faculty members reviewed the assessment findings.

A review of the findings indicates that a majority of the students satisfactorily met the criteria for student learning outcome #1. Students meet with portfolio advisors on a regular basis to review progress and obtain feedback. Students are asked to resubmit revised narratives based on the feedback they receive. Currently, final narratives are used for assessment purposes. While the opportunity for students to submit drafts and conference with their faculty advisors assists the students in making clearer connections between their learning experiences and classroom application, the fact that our assessment is based on their final documents makes it difficult to determine what areas the students had difficulty with. To address this issue, future assessments will involve analyzing drafts rather than final documents.

**Student Learning Outcome #2**

What will students know or be able to do or believe? Be specific.

Students completing the MA program in Exceptional Student Education will critique a published research study.

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It is recommended that **two means** of assessment be prepared for each student learning outcome. One means of assessment may be sufficient.

**Means of Assessment #1:** Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

In the Foundations of Educational Research course, MA students will be given a published research study and required to identify potential strengths and weaknesses in the problem statement, the research design, the data analysis, and the interpretation of data and offer appropriate suggestions for correction.

**Criteria for Success:** Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

Ninety percent or more of the MA students within EDF 6481 will earn an overall score of 4 or above (on a 5-point scale) on a series of items designed to assess students’ ability to identify potential strengths and weaknesses in a published research study, and their ability to offer appropriate corrections. For these students (the 90%), on no specific item will the assigned rating be less than 3.

**Measure:** A 25-item, instrument containing items tapping 5 dimensions.

**ASSESSMENT REPORT** - These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: Oareports@acad.usf.edu

**Findings:** What findings resulted from assessment activities?

The assessment activity contained a total of five content domains: problem statement, research design, data analysis, interpretation, and research improvements. Student performance was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Score of 4 (good) or above</th>
<th>Score of 3 (satisfactory) or above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Problem Statement</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research Design</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Data Analysis</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interpretation</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Research Improvements</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the students met the criterion of 4 or higher on average with no score lower than 3.

**Use of Results:** What changes, if any, were made in response to the findings? This section should indicate that faculty members reviewed the assessment findings.
Results indicate that our students need greater exposure to research in all areas, but especially in the area of interpretation of study results. If we expect students to utilize research based practices in their classroom, results would indicate that students need additional experience in critiquing published research. This assessment outcome will remain as is. Revisions made with regard to assessment outcome 3 will provide students with additional instruction in writing and/or conducting research in their classroom.
Student Learning Outcome #3

What will students know or be able to do or believe? Be specific.

Students will demonstrate proficiency in the use of systematic inquiry to inform classroom instruction.

ASSESSMENT PLAN - The completed assessment plan is e-mailed to Oaplans@acad.usf.edu at the beginning of the assessment period.

It is recommended that two means of assessment be prepared for each student learning outcome. One means of assessment may be sufficient.

Means of Assessment #1: Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

In their final semester, students will submit a comprehensive portfolio demonstrating their mastery in five skills areas (assessment, instruction, collaboration, classroom management, and systematic inquiry) and five domains of practice (ethical, affirming of diversity, reflective, competent, and user of technology). Each skill area contains a narrative reflection describing what they knew before starting the program, what they know now as a result of completing the program, and how they have or will apply what they have learned in their classroom practice. Narrative reflection for the systematic inquiry skill area will be analyzed to determine whether the candidate demonstrated the use of systematic inquiry to inform classroom practice.

Criteria for Success: Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

90% of the candidates will provide specific examples of how they implemented a systematic inquiry process to inform classroom practice.

Measure: Narrative Analysis

Means of Assessment #2: Describe the procedures, strategies, or means that will be used to collect information on student learning.

In their final semester, students will submit a comprehensive portfolio demonstrating their mastery in five skills areas (assessment, instruction, collaboration, classroom management, and systematic inquiry) and five domains of practice (ethical, affirming of diversity, reflective, competent, and user of technology). Each skill area contains a narrative reflection describing what they knew before starting the program, what they know now as a result of completing the program, and how they have or will apply what they have learned in their classroom practice. Narrative reflection for the systematic inquiry skill area will be analyzed to determine
whether the candidate was skilled in reflecting upon their experiences in systematic inquiry.

Criteria for Success: Describe the criteria for success related to this means of assessment.

Ninety percent of students will receive a score of 3 or above (on a 4 point scale) on their systematic inquiry narratives submitted in their comprehensive portfolio.

Measure: Rubric (2 Evaluators)

ASSESSMENT REPORT - These items are completed after assessment activities, at the end of the assessment period. Completed assessment reports are e-mailed to: Oareports@acad.usf.edu

Findings: What findings resulted from assessment activities?

Rubrics were analyzed to determine the percent of students that achieved a score of 3 or above on their systematic inquiry narrative. Systematic inquiry includes the skills of planning, design, collection of data, analysis, and interpretation of an investigation using either quantitative and/or qualitative approaches in order to address questions arising from the classroom and that may contribute to the knowledge base of our field. The student narratives are to answer three questions: What did you know before starting this program? What do you know now as a result of this program? How are you or will you apply what you have learned? Students were able to adequately respond to each question and provide supporting artifacts, although their ability to use systematic inquiry to inform their practice was less evident. Eighty nine percent of the students scored 3 or higher on a 4 point scale.

Use of Results: What changes, if any, were made in response to the findings? This section should indicate that faculty members reviewed the assessment findings.

The process for submitting the comprehensive portfolio includes an initial meeting with the portfolio advisor to review specific requirements and timelines. Students are required to submit a pre-draft of their portfolio for review and feedback. They have one additional opportunity to revise their portfolio before the final copy is due. Once the final copy is submitted, the portfolio is reviewed by two faculty members.

In reviewing the narratives, we find the area of systematic inquiry to be the most challenging for our students. While most are able to provide artifacts demonstrating the skills associated with systematic inquiry, they are less able to
directly link these skills to classroom instruction. It is critical for students to be able to utilize systematic inquiry methods to develop effective instruction, analyze results, and make appropriate changes to enhance student achievement. As a result of our findings, students will be required to submit two research papers or one research paper and one action research paper related to their classroom instruction. Students will be expected to clearly articulate how their findings will be implemented in their classroom or used to inform their practice.

Duplicate this sheet to assess additional student learning outcomes.