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FACS 170 Introduction to Early Care and Education: A Three Year Analysis and Peer Review of College Teaching/Learning

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FACS 170 Introduction to Early Care and Education
A Three-Year Analysis and Peer Review of College Teaching/Learning
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IV. Peer Reviews for FACS 170:

Year 1 (2002): Dr. Edwards taught the course for the first time (with Dean Kostelnik) and participated in the Peer Review project.
At the end of Year 1, the benchmark portfolio was presented in a panel at the national conference on Making Learning Visible: Peer Review and the Scholarship of Teaching, held in Lincoln, Nebraska, March 2004.

Year 2 (2004): Dr. Carolyn Edwards and Toni Hill-Monsen taught the course together.

Year 3 (2005): They taught together again, and Dr. Edwards was part of an advanced peer review team.

What was discovered in Years #1 and #2:

• All students gained basic knowledge about specific facts and concepts, especially when material was covered in their textbook and class.
• Students tended to place less weight on the final exam and more evenly on all the graded activities in the course.
• Parent panel found it more effective in transmitting both the importance of inclusion.
• Unit on culturally sensitive education was very appreciated by students.
• Practitioner presentations were appreciated by students, but may not have been explicit enough about how they operationalized the concept of culturally appropriate practice.
• Minute papers and final reflective class activity were good ways to assess student attitudes and what they were learning.

Sample Student Comment, Final Reflections in Year #1:

One thing I learned in this class that was especially important was, “It’s the stories from the nurses.”
The part of my teaching philosophy that was most affected is, “I want a teacher needs to teach all children depending on their intelligence level or their disabilities.”

Something I learned that surprised me was, “How the ethics play into [dealing with] children.”

Year #3 Plans for a Classroom Assessment (Fall, 2005):

Learning Goals: In assessing their teaching, the instructors want to focus just two of the central concepts of the course. The first is the importance of developing a “moment by moment” awareness of what it means for an early childhood professional to use developmentally/appropriate practices as part of the child’s experience from birth to age 8. Students will become more able to articulate these two concepts and relate them to their key concepts (themes) of the course.

Teaching Strategies among those two concepts:

1. The course was reorganized with three separate units focused on the material related to (1) Professional, (2) Developmental/appropriate and Culturally Sensitive, and (3) Family and Consumer. In the first unit, students did an activity that showed them how the core concepts correspond to the teaching standards (competencies) for the Nebraska Early Childhood Education Unified Birth to Grade 3 teacher certification, for example,

Developmentally Appropriate:

1. Use environmental assessments, individual and group guidance, and problem-solving techniques as part of the curriculum.
2. Based on developmental/historical and psychosocial foundations of early childhood education.
3. Establish and maintain physically and psychologically safe and healthful learning environments that support growth and development.
4. Understand principles of organization and operation of programs for children birth through age 8.

Culturally Sensitive:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and sensitivity to differences in family structure and cultures.
2. Recognize that children are best understood as the family, culture, and society.