

Columbia Gorge Community College

**Early Education and Family Studies
Program Review**

December 2009

Early Education & Family Studies (EEFS), formally ECE (Early Childhood Education), is a career and technical field that is currently undergoing steady and consistent changes to increase the professional reputation and qualification of those who work in the field. Beginning October of 2011, 50% of Head Start and Early Head Start teaching staff will be required to have a minimum of an associate's degree in Early Education and Family Studies, with an EEFS baccalaureate or advanced degree preferred.

EEFS is a field that offers employment opportunities in a variety of settings – from federally-funded Head Start programs to privately owned child care centers. The demand for early childhood programs continues to increase, not only in response to the growing demand for out-of-home child care, but also in recognition of the critical importance of educational experiences during the early years. Decades of research demonstrate that high-quality developmentally appropriate early childhood programs produce positive short and long term effects on children's cognitive and social development. President Obama is urging states to impose higher standards across all publicly funded early learning settings, develop new programs to improve opportunities and outcomes, and improve the early education workforce.

Columbia Gorge Community College's (CGCC) Early Education & Family Studies program is planned as a career ladder to accommodate the part-time as well as the full-time student. Our early education articulation agreement with Portland State University allows for up to 80 transfer credits toward PSU's child and family studies degree or degree completion program. The CGCC associate's degree offers students the opportunity to gain essential practical experience through practicum opportunities, as well as relevant course work.

The Program Review of the Early Education & Family Studies program is timely in that it comes at a point when the entire profession is being looked upon to strive for a higher standard. We, in turn, can take the EEFS program to a higher level by increasing the rigor of the curriculum, expanding and strengthening the practicum opportunities, and utilizing a knowledgeable advisory committee to guide our decision making. This Review will serve as the foundation to a stronger, more dynamic program that better meets the learning needs of the students and effectively prepares them for a successful career in the Early Education workforce.

Early Education and Family Studies at CGCC

CGCC's Early Education and Family Studies program, like PCC's, includes a one-year Certificate and two-year Associate of Applied Sciences degree. Coursework in Early Childhood Education and a practicum experience (student teaching) is required for each level of the program. The practicum experience is competency based; that is, a student must demonstrate a specific level of skill with children in order to progress to the next level.

The EEFS program at CGCC and PCC are open entry and open exit. Students are generally considered to be a part of the program when they start their Level I practicum. Once students begin practicum, a student folder is established for them. A student taking 15 to 18 credits each term can complete the AAS degree in two years. Most students take longer than two years typically due to employment in the field or because additional time is needed to meet the practicum competencies.

Due to the program's open entry and exit, the number of students in the program at any one time is variable. Currently, the department serves approximately 15 students at various stages of program completion. The department graduates approximately 4 students each year in the AAS program with an additional 3-4 student completing a certificate each year.

Students who graduate from the program with a certificate exceed the State of Oregon's requirements for early childhood education teachers in early childhood care and education programs (30 quarter credits is required by the State). Students with an AAS degree in EEFS from CGCC can generally find jobs in NAEYC-accredited child care centers, the highest quality in the area, or in Head Start. These centers generally offer the best wages in the field and often fringe benefits. Additionally, students with a completed AAS degree in EEFS can also take advantage of the college's articulation agreement with four-year colleges and universities in Oregon or Washington.

Evaluation Process

During the 2009 school year the EEFS department at CGCC conducted several meetings to prepare for the program review. Meeting participants included the Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE), the Department Chair of CTE, EEFS instructors and at one point the EEFS Advisory Committee. Several changes were initiated as the result of these meetings which included:

- Placing all courses in a 2 year cycle
 - 100 level in one year
 - 200 level in the 2nd year
- Development of electives for the EEFS department
- Assigning instructors to specific courses based on their education
- Modifications to practicum process
 - Students are enrolled in practicum's by instructor not student services
 - Practicum must be outside of their work area
 - A minimum of 25% of the hours, with a preference of 50%-75%
 - Different practicum site for each year
- Fall of 2009 monthly program review meetings were conducted
 - Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE)
 - Department Chair of CTE
 - Instructors of EEFS

During the fall 2009 meetings, a student survey was developed and sent to over 70 EEFS students through Survey Monkey and mailings. Thirty-five surveys were returned, the majority through Survey Monkey.

From the survey, we found that 60% of our students reside in the Hood River area, 73% are white, 50% are between 19 and 40 years old, around 21% are in their 2nd term of school, with 55% planning on graduating in 2011. The majority of our students, 44%, are planning to transfer to a four-year institution for an EEFS BA degree with another 41% taking courses that are required for their current position. Approximately 65% of our current students are working, 58%

are married and 54% don't have children at home. We do have 15% of our students right now who are still in high school taking dual credit courses through their high schools.

Two questions relating to program specifics are as follows:

12. Do you feel Columbia Gorge Community College's Early Childhood Education Program provided...

			yes	no	not yet
your educational needs			78.8%	9.1%	12.10%
a foundation in Early Childhood Education Practices			87.1%	6.5%	6.5%
a reasonable field experience (Practicum)			57.6%	9.1%	33.30%
skills and strategies that prepared you for multiple roles within Early Childhood			87.9%	3.0%	9.1%
education courses that strengthened your conceptual knowledge in multiple areas			81.3%	9.4%	9.4%
professional education experience			81.3%	9.4%	9.4%
time to develop confidence, skills and career goals			86.7%	0.0%	13.30%
options to change your career goals as needed			87.5%	3.1%	9.4%
assistance in transferring credits			51.6%	9.7%	38.70%
Provided classes I needed			65.6%	18.8%	15.60%

14. CGCC's ECE program allowed flexibility in:

			yes	no	not yet
Distance education and/or face to face courses			84.4%	6.3%	9.4%
Non credit and credit courses			80.0%	6.7%	13.3%
Electives choices			64.5%	19.4%	16.1%
Worksite course and/or college classroom site			75.0%	18.8%	6.3%
Specific courses for your career goals			75.0%	21.9%	3.1%
Courses offered over weekend or in shortened timeline			84.4%	6.3%	9.5%

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

This section of the Review involves four categories for improvement of the quality of education: 1) developing and evaluating curriculum using national standards; 2) reviewing and revising the course content learning outcomes for EEFS courses; 3) describing how ECE courses address Columbia Gorge Community College's Core Outcomes, and 4) providing evidence that the Core Outcomes are being met by students. Work in this area included several discussion meetings and writing sessions which included the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director, CTE Chair, and several part-time EEFS instructors. When considering what National Standards to incorporate into our work, the decision was made to use the two most notable and well-established organizations representing professionalism in the field of Early Childhood Education: the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) <http://naeyc.org> and the Council for Professional Recognition <http://www.cdacouncil.org>

Developing and Evaluating Curriculum Using National Standards

All EEFS Instructors were asked to evaluate their courses and assess which of the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and which of the Child Development Associate Competency Goals from the Council for Professional Recognition are addressed in the courses they teach. The results of this evaluation are represented in the two tables below. This process also provided the opportunity to see the synthesis of course content as it relates to learning outcomes and national standards. [**See Tables**]

The Early Education and Family Studies Department also has developed a new Department web-site which will introduce students to the competencies, course content learning outcomes and college core outcomes. The web-site provides a much needed resource for current and potential students and highlights the new effort to link to national standards. In addition, the practicum requirements and application process has been revised to include the use of these national standards. The extensive work that has gone into the revamping of the practicum coursework and experience will provide a more cohesive Early Education and Family Studies Program and more comprehensive professional development preparation for students. The web-site will eventually include the new practicum notebook and portfolio guide.

Columbia Gorge Community College
A.S. in Early Education and Family Studies
And NAEYC Standards for Core Courses

<i>Standard</i>	EEFS Course where addressed
<i>Standard 1. Promoting Child Development and Learning</i>	ECE 226, ECE 121, ECE 122, HE 262 ECE124, ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE 224, ECE236, ECE 234
<i>Standard 2. Building Family and Community Relationships</i>	ECE 124, ECE 200, ECE 201 ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE224,
<i>Standard 3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families</i>	ECE 121, ECE 122, ECE 123, ECE 221 ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264,
<i>Standard 4. Teaching and Learning</i>	ECE 200, ECE 221, ECE224, ECE 226, ECE 120, ECE
<i>4a. Connecting with children and families</i>	121, ECE 122, ECE 123, ECE224, ECE234, ECE
<i>4b. Using developmentally effective approaches</i>	201(HEC 201), HE 262 ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133,
<i>4c. Understanding content knowledge in early education</i>	ECE 134, ECE 236, ECE260, ECE264,
<i>4d. Building meaningful curriculum</i>	
<i>Standard 5. Becoming a Professional</i>	ECE 200, ECE 201 ECE224, ECE234, ECE 130, ECE124, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264,

Columbia Gorge Community College
A.S. in Early Childhood Course of Study
And Child Development Associate (CDA)
Competency Goals for Core Courses

CDA COMPETENCY GOALS	FUNCTIONAL AREAS	EEFS COURSE WHERE THIS IS ADDRESSED
Goal I. To establish and maintain a safe, healthy learning environment.	1. Safe 2. Healthy 3. Learning Environment	ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE 121, ECE 122, HEC 262
Goal II. To advance physical and intellectual competence	4. Physical 5. Cognitive 6. Communication 7. Creative	ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE 226, ECE 123
Goal III. To support social and emotional development	8. Self 9. Social	ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE 221, ECE 226,

and to provide positive guidance	10. Guidance	ECE 121
Goal IV. To establish positive and productive relationships with families	11. Families	ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE 120, ECE 201, ECE 122
Goal V. To ensure a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs	12. Program Management	ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE 201, ECE 200
Goal VI. To maintain a commitment to professionalism	13. Professionalism	ECE 130, ECE131, ECE133, ECE 134, ECE260, ECE264, ECE 200

Reviewing, Revising and Assessing the Course Learning Outcomes for EEFS

The EEFS Review Team looked at all the existing Course Content Outcome Guides (CCOG) for Early Childhood courses. Each Instructor was asked for editing and revision comments about the guides. The plan is to continue for this school year to review and revise these learning outcomes and then begin development of the program and degree outcomes. In addition to reviewing and revising the CCOG’s, instructors will be asked to make clear links between course learning outcomes and course assignments. The fall 2009 faculty in-service included a training session of scoring rubrics and assessing course learning outcomes. Support will be provided to instructors to continue to ensure that assignments are designed to create ways that students demonstrate they can meet the course learning outcomes. In addition, the EEFS Department has now implemented the practice that each EEFS course include at least one assignment or “artifact” that will document the student competencies expected. These artifacts will be added to the Student’s Early Childhood Professional Portfolio.

How EEFS Courses Address Columbia Gorge Community College’s Core Outcomes

All instructors at CGCC will be using the template below to begin the process of ensuring that Columbia Gorge Community College’s Core Outcomes are being addressed in every course offered at the College. [see **Template**]

CGCC Core Outcomes	In Syllabus	How Assessed	Term
Communication -effectively orally and in writing using appropriate language and modality			
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving -creatively solve problems using discipline-related and relevant methods of research, personal reflection, reasoning and evaluation of information			
Professional Competence -acquire the necessary skills needed to perform the tasks required for either transfer to a four year college or employment			
Cultural Awareness -cultivate a respect for diverse cultural perspectives			
Community and environmental responsibility -address consequences of human activity upon our social and natural world through their respective discipline			

Providing Evidence That the Core Outcomes are Being Met By Students

Following the actions listed above related to addressing the College Core Outcomes in all courses, the evidence of how students are meeting Core Outcomes will include assessing students' work, surveying students' understanding of the outcomes, and documentation of the results. Instructors may be expected to create a spreadsheet that shows evidence of how students meet Core Outcomes.

Strengths to Improve the Quality of Education

The review and revision of the ECE coursework and Practicum experiences to include national standards and professional portfolio development;

1. The creation of an EEFS Department Web Page:
<http://www.cgcc.cc.or.us/academics/dept/education/ecehome.cfm>
2. The Program Review work brought together part-time instructors to create, for the first time, an EEFS Department connection. This offered the beginning of an opportunity for much needed dialogue and problem-solving about the direction of the EEFS Program at CGCC.

Weaknesses to Improving the Quality of Education

1. Fragmented EEFS Program, lack of communication between instructional administration, student services, part-time instructors and students;
2. Difficulty staying current with textbooks and other components of EEFS Program as outlined by Portland Community College.

Recommendations to Improve the Quality of Education

1. Continue to explore ways to keep part-time faculty involved in Department planning and development;
2. Continue to develop links between course assignments, portfolio development, and the Course Learning Outcomes and College Core Outcomes;

MAINTAINING INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY

Over the course of the year we conducted several department review meetings with current instructors, the CTE Director and CTE Department Chair. During the meetings we discussed department concerns, acknowledged achievements, and set goals for program improvement. Our department chair conducted instructor performance reviews, as well as reviewed course syllabi to ensure course content covered in individual classes aligned with PCC’s Course Content and Outcomes. We conducted brainstorming sessions on maintaining instructional quality. The grid below depicts information acquired during our sessions. We are pleased with the number of recommendations we already have implemented or are in the process of implementing.

Strengths	Weakness	Recommendations
*Development of portfolio system for all courses and finishing it during the final practicum	*We need to increased focus on information literacy and technology for students	Add to our current courses: *electives for students *Information literacy *Writing literacy *Portfolio development skills technology.
*Consistent course schedule (allowing for current students to phase in)	*Our communication with PCC and being aware of their changes. *All EEFS Faculty do not know each other.	Serve on EEFS SAC @ PCC *Faculty meeting 1 time per year

*CGCC web page for EEFS *Instructor Performance reviews. *Review of Course Content and Outcomes. *Review Course Syllabus insures outcomes are addressed.	*The program lacks cohesiveness between student services, administrator and instructors. *There is no system to tie the classes together so students can see the big picture.	Cross component instruction: *EEFS instructors should require a set standard for written assignments *APA formatted. *EEFS instructors should also support and facilitate use of technology, speaking and research skills for all core classes.
*The Portfolio handbook requires students to gather artifacts from all core classes.	*“The bar is set way to low.” *Students expect a much higher grade than their performance warrants.	*Use scoring rubrics for writing, speaking, and research. *All EEFS instructors will guide students in artifact collection in all classes.
*Assigning Practicum classes to one instructor. *Reviewing practicum systems and updating requirements	*Procedures and forms for practicum’s are out dated.	*Continue to review and improve quality of Practicum classes. *Continue to meet with program personal at potential and existing Practicum sites
*Obtaining and adhering to PCC’s current book list	*Instructors are not all on the same page. (they don’t know what is being taught in other classes) * Instructors do not know what would support other instructors or if material is already being covered	*Peer performance reviews *Staff meeting, Syllabus sharing and conversation

In reviewing and maintaining instructional quality we identified three main categories to address.

1. Alignment with the college mission;
2. Reviewing instructor qualifications;
3. Evaluate students’ ability to access external resources.

Alignment With College Mission

Columbia Gorge Community College builds dreams and transforms lives by providing lifelong educational programs that strengthen our community.

We address alignment with the college mission statement by scheduling regular meetings of the Early Education Family Studies Advisory Committee. This committee is made up of community childcare providers, Head Start representatives, employer-funded centers and private providers, Childcare Partners (A grant funded program), college CTE administrators and faculty, and local High School partners. At these meeting we address the changing face of the Early Childhood field. We strategize ways to meet the expanding needs in our communities.

Reviewing Instructor Qualifications

Early Education and Family Studies instructors shall meet one of the following sets of criteria as recommended by the appropriate Portland Community College (PCC) Subject Area Committee (SAC):

- a. AAS degree in subject area **OR**
- b. Professional Education:
 - Professional Development Registry (PDR) Level 4, OR
 - At least 30 quarter credits of ECE-related coursework, OR
 - Child Development Associate (CDA) and at least 20 quarter credits of ECE-related coursework.
- c. Plus 5 years of recent, full-time, non-teaching work experience in the field. In Early Childhood Education, this refers to recent, full-time work experience with children, families and ECE programs.

We reviewed EEFS instructor qualifications and assigned instructors to classes in accordance with their area of expertise. We also assigned one person to review and revise the student practicum program. A way to connect all of the Early Education and Family Studies classes into one cohesive program was discussed. This would allow students to record their experiences and see their growth over time.

Ideas being implemented for winter term 2010:

1. **Students will start a professional portfolio early in their education career that will evolve and be refined as they progress.**
 - ❖ All EEFS instructors will guide students with the selection of artifacts for their portfolios.
 - ❖ A portfolio Handbook and template has been created to guide students with the development of their portfolios.
 - ❖ A standard for written assignments will be determined that all instructors will require of students. The Portfolio Handbook has rubrics for scoring written assignments.

2. All Instructors will encourage and support students in advancing their technology skills.

- ❖ Early in the student's career, s/he will be offered an orientation for the EEFS Program demonstrating the data collection process and how to save to a USB drive.
- ❖ Instructors will support and encourage use of technology for term/class projects.
- ❖ Portfolio development will be done electronically: the students will have time and equipment available during seminar classes. Student can select the media in which they want to showcase their portfolio at the end of the Practicum Seminar.
- ❖ Students will be advised of equipment available and how to access it from the college library.

3. Instructors will encourage students' use of outside resources:

❖ In the course of the review we discovered students were lacking in the use of external resources.

- ❖ Increase focus on Information Literacy.
- ❖ Instructors will contact the library and schedule training for students.
- ❖ Students will be assigned more research activities.
- ❖ Instructors will document projects that require outside resources.
- ❖ Instructors will check Course Content and Outcome Guides to ensure they are adhering to course requirements for using external resources.

In conclusion we feel we have a strong team working together for overall program improvement. We are taking a proactive approach and addressing concerns as they are identified. We collectively agree our commitment to the EEFS Program is evident in the changes we are implementing.

Respond to the Changing Needs of the Students and Community

When we considered responding to the needs of our students and community we looked at our instructors' professional development activities; possible changes in student demographics and their impact on instruction; feedback from students, industry and the community about

changes in curriculum; ways to increase enrollment, improve retention and student success and what changes we have made to increase student access and diversity.

In the last year, Early Education and Family Studies Advisory Committee meetings took place to evaluate and respond to the changing needs of the students and community. Through these meetings and instructor meetings, several professional development activities and curricular changes were made. EEFS instructors took the time to evaluate our curriculum using national standards, reviewing and revising learning outcomes, ensuring outcomes are being met by students, and describing which EEFS courses address the Core Outcomes for CGCC.

There were three specific tasks that were completed. First, instructors collected their developmental trainings, activities or classes they have attended since they began teaching for CGCC. Second, an EEFS survey was sent to past and current EEFS students in addition to adding questions to student course evaluations. Third, we increased enrollment and student access and diversity.

As a group, we found through these developmental activities that our strengths consist of the following: 1) The quality and frequency of trainings and classes that the instructors have and are attending; 2) Instructors and the Advisory Committee have had full input to the new design for the CGCC EEFS Website; 3) Proposed changes have been addressed quickly and adequately due to the effectiveness of the EEFS team (CTE Director, CTE Department Chair and EEFS instructors).

The EEFS CGCC Advisory Committee meets three or four times a year and through these meetings the Advisory Committee has addressed some areas of growth. They have identified the need for increased and consistent enrollment, the need to provide student support systems, expand resources for Spanish speaking students, and make sure the Advisory Committee is racially and linguistically diverse. The returned survey demonstrates a higher number of Hispanic students responded than our college's general population reports, which shows a 12.5% Hispanic population.

1. Your Ethnicity (please select one):

Hispanic	27%
White (not of Hispanic origin)	73%

The Early Education and Family Studies Advisory Committee recommended the following: The College will host an orientation or Open House to the EEFS program each academic year; offer Hispanic or Bilingual students tutoring services; and finally, offer EEFS books in both languages where available. Several instructors shared how they show students websites that translate their work so they can write in their native language first and then translate.

Conclusion of ECE Program Review at CGCC

As mentioned in the beginning of this report, the review of the EEFS program came at a good time. Not only is there a push at the federal level to improve and grow early learning programs, but there was also a need at CGCC to evaluate the quality and value of its existing EEFS program. The results of the review recounted in this report, reflect the development of a stronger, more cohesive program that will better serve students and employers. We are hopeful that these program improvements will generate student interest and augment future enrollment.