



Walking the Talk: Assessing Integrative Learning Across the Curriculum

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Human Development & Family Studies Curricula

- Applied interdisciplinary majors designed to foster the growth of reflective professionals who:
 - Communicate & collaborate effectively
 - Use developmental knowledge to identify strengths and promote resilience
 - Develop critical thinking skills & ability to stand up for oneself & others in the face of injustice





Integrative Strategies & Practices

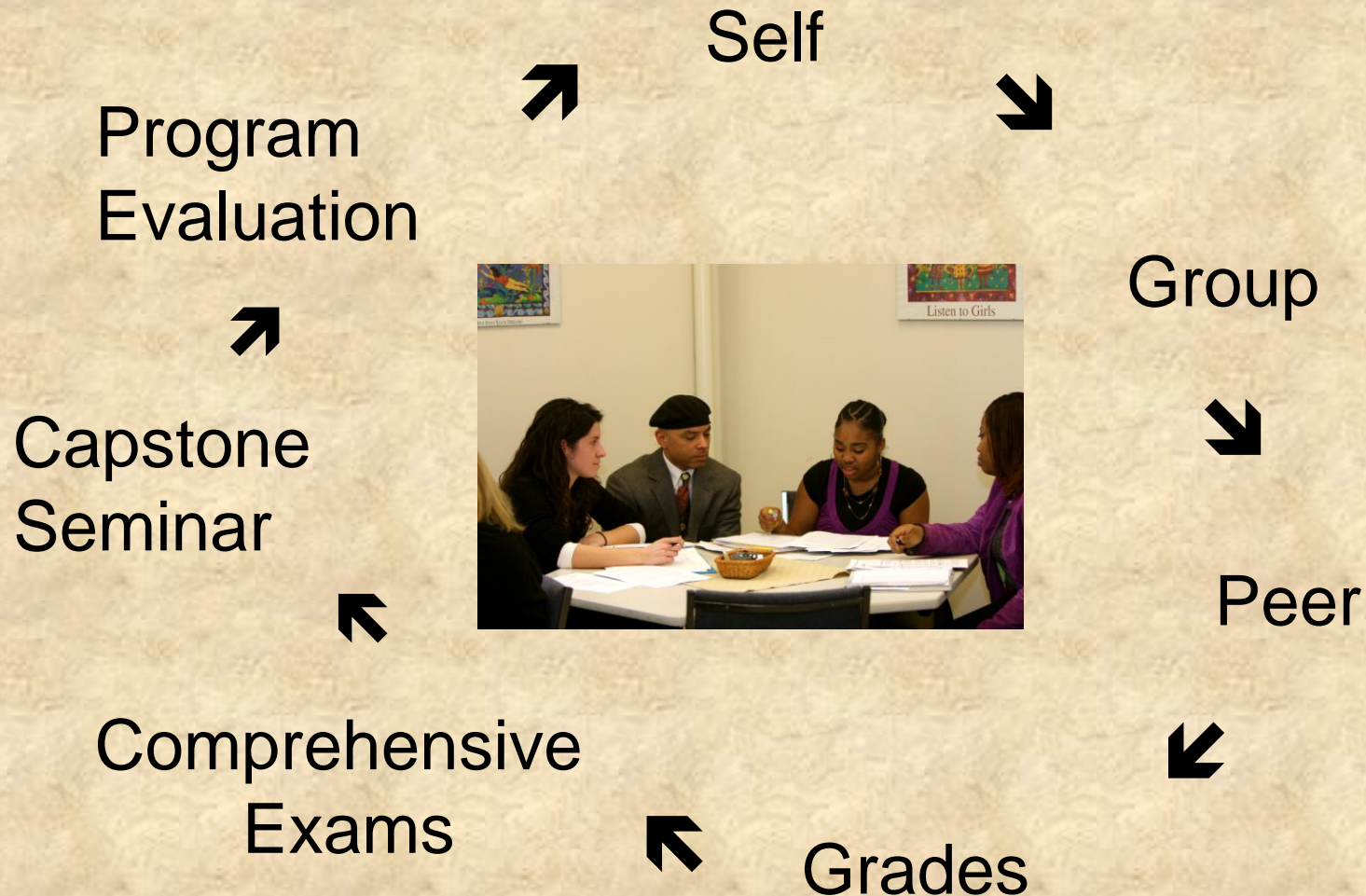
- Applied & theoretical learning integrated across scope & sequence of courses
- Focus on personal & social application of knowledge to real world experiences
- Carefully sequenced assignments & multiple levels of assessment → increased sense of personal competence



Curriculum Highlights

- Integrated coursework linked to real world experiences
- Collaborative learning communities complete varied learning activities & projects
- Two senior internships in two different types of human service agencies
- Capstone projects – research & advocacy
- Comprehensive exams – oral & written

Assessment Strategies

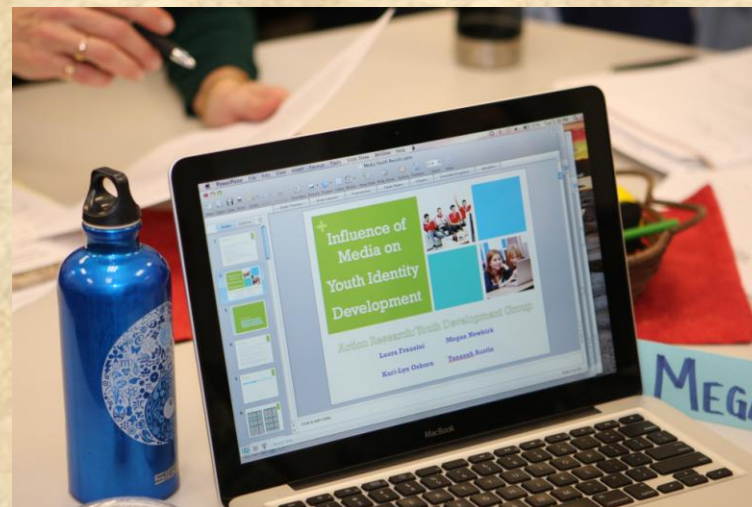




Case Study - Karen

- Family studies major
- 1st Internship - high school consumer & family science program
- 2nd Internship – State of CT Juvenile Prosecutor’s office
- Capstone research project (group of 4) – “How Media Influences Adolescent Identity Development”

- Senior independent study project: “Effective Program Development Strategies: Community needs assessments and youth services”
- Presentations of findings: SJC campus symposium day & a community-wide forum for the sponsoring youth services agency





Karen's Final Program Evaluation

“The most useful aspects of my HDFS major courses . . . were the constant connections drawn between my education and the professional world beyond the classroom.”

“These experiences challenged me to enter the professional world in a way that broadened my understanding of the career path I had chosen while still providing guidance and support from my college professors.”



Outcomes 2011

- *Oral comprehensive scores* - 55% 'high pass' rate (nearly double the next highest rate since 2007)
- *Written comprehensive scores* – highest 'high pass' rate since 2006; high low pass rate on theoretical essay
- *Coordination seminar projects* - standard grading criteria show consistent improvement in student performance

Final program evaluation



- *Annual analyses* show positive trends in student ratings across all areas
- *Student comments* demonstrate appreciation for cultural knowledge, understanding of families, real world experiences, guidance
- *Student suggestions* - more field work prior to senior internships, devote more time to understanding the research process, more emphasis on personal growth in field work

Sample Program Response to Outcomes

- Integrate opportunities for students to explain and apply theoretical perspectives more effectively into all courses
- Use observational vignette DVD's in multiple courses
 - provide visible examples to stimulate student discussion about the application of theoretical frameworks and practice in the use of specific observational techniques

Sample Assessments

Collaborative self assessment sample items

- How would you rate your effort to maintain good communication with other members? Give an example:
- How would you compare your contribution to the project relative to your partners? Give an example:
- What would you like to work on to be a better collaborator?

Collaborative group assessment sample items

- How well was your group able to create a positive work climate? Describe what the group members did that did and/or did not create a positive work climate:
- How well was your group able to recognize and build on each other's strengths? Describe what the group did or did not do to identify and build on each member's strengths

Peer assessments sample items

- Is the information arranged in an orderly sequence? Give suggestions for making the arrangement more effective.
- Does the discussion tie the literature review to the research question? What information is missing? Can you suggest any other topics that the author might include?
- One important thing that I learned from this presentation:
- Recommendations for refinement:

Oral comprehensive exam sample criteria

- **Clarity** – topic introduced, addressed, & summarized

Scope – significant range

Depth – includes theories, research, cultural effects

Analysis – issues identified, knowledge applied, thoughtful comparisons

- **Integration of media** – organized, enhances understanding

Word usage – free of errors and slang

Audience contact – engages participants

Response to questions – clear, concise, on topic

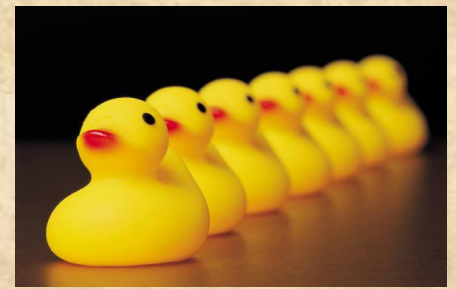
Written comprehensive exam

For this exam you will write 3 essays, one for each of the three course groupings. For each essay you will identify a key concept from the “Big Ideas” lists you have discussed in class.

Assessment criteria

In each of the 3 essays you:

- demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept
- provide at least one personal example of an application of this concept and make it very clear how your example fits with the concept
- organize and clearly express your ideas



Small group capstone research project

The **research report** fits APA criteria and represents quality work:

introduction makes the point of the study clear

results summarize the data in a way that shows what you found without interpretation

discussion provides a clear answer to your question and a meaningful discussion of what it means, limitations, and next steps



Small group capstone advocacy project

- Problem is clearly defined
- Problem carefully researched - concise, relevant summary provided
- Reasonable solution given with clear action steps for audience
- Action Alert is a clear, concise, readable, persuasive statement of problem & solution – both well matched to the audience
- Briefing is well-planned, well-presented, persuasive, & well matched to the audience

Final program evaluation sample items

My HDFS program has prepared me to:

share information about developmental theories with others.

respectfully explore and learn about the cultural beliefs and assumptions of others.

become an effective and collaborative team member.

apply my knowledge and skills to new settings and complex problems.