

Title of Grant: Building Blocks for a Common Degree

S2008 – 157P –FF

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Abstract:

The Early Childhood program has developed a common A.A.S. degree in early childhood. With the alignment have come significant course changes and a need to review and edit all existing and new course content summaries. Additionally, the courses need to be aligned with Governor Kaine's Start Strong Initiatives as increased federal and state policy initiatives have increased the required training for teachers working in early childhood.

Actual Outcomes:

We aligned the course content for the CHD program for the VCCS early childhood degree and certificate courses. We developed universal/common portfolio criteria. This addressed the first three expected outcomes and we anticipate applying for a continuation grant for the fourth expected outcome.

Other Colleges:

Two faculty from NVCC worked on this initiative in conjunction with a faculty member from TNCC. Results were presented at the peer group in the end of October and suggestions from the entire peer group were integrated into a finished product that was posted on the peer group Blackboard site. All VCCS institutions that offer Early Childhood programs were represented in the initial feedback waves, at the peer group meeting, in the final feedback wave, and in access to the Early Childhood Blackboard site where the information is posted.

Discussion and Critique:

The major implication for faculty is that all faculty have access to resources for courses that may be newly added at their institution. The implication for students is that they may complete courses in their degree at any institution without missing any information from the program as a whole, as the program is now more standardized between institutions. Finally, the students will prepare an educational portfolio for their interviews and other professional development activities that reflect their participation in the VCCS high-quality early childhood training programs: the AAS and certificate programs in Early Childhood.

Evaluation:

The peer group response was deeply important to the committee and was overwhelmingly positive. This alignment project was critical to success of our program and to the potential for articulation agreements.

Dissemination:

We have taken the results to the peer group and posted them on the peer group Blackboard site. The alignment of course content and the overall degree was reported at a state-level early childhood meeting (Governor's Working Group Task Force on School Readiness) and met with great enthusiasm. Future work should include developing a model from this project and using the results to create a framework for programmatic accreditation from the National Association for Education of Young Children.