GECC ASSESSMENT:

CEDP 490-01: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY SENIOR CAPSTONE

SPRING QUARTER, 2010

INSTRUCTOR: Ginny Mehlert, M. S.

June 30, 2010

Goal #3: For students to synthesize program-specific knowledge, methods and skills.

Objective: Prepare a capstone project (in groups or individually) that showcases disciplinary knowledge, methods, and skills.
DESCRIPTION OF CAPSTONE PROJECT (from syllabus):

This assignment, worth 100 total points, requires students to identify a human community (local or global) with a need or issue that they would like to address in a positive way during the quarter. This community project may be a single project taken on by the entire class or it may consist of two or more group projects, depending on what class members themselves decide. More information about this project will be provided in class. There are 5 graded parts to this assignment, some that are individual assignments and some that are group assignments.

Part 1: LIST OF COMMUNITIES AND NEEDS (worth 10 points, due in class Thursday, April 1):
Students will individually type a list of at least three communities (local or global) that have a need for help. This list will include a description of the needs of each of the three communities. This assignment is graded on timeliness; completeness; and spelling and grammar. (In class, students will then choose to help meet the needs of any of the communities identified in the class-generated lists by forming one or more groups who will then plan a community outreach project of their choosing.)

Part 2: WRITTEN PLAN (worth 10 points, due in class Thursday, April 8): Each group will turn in ONE paper that describes the community they've chosen and its assumed needs, tentative plans of the group members for meeting the needs of their chosen community, and a tentative timeline for completion of their project. Each group member will then sign the written plan to indicate their acceptance of the project. This group assignment is graded on timeliness; spelling and grammar; completeness of the description of the community and its assumed needs; completeness of the description of the group’s intentions to complete the project (i.e., fundraising, collection of supplies, volunteering of time, etc.); and appropriateness of the tentative timeline for completing the project.

Part 3: THEORIST PAPER (worth 20 points for final draft, due in class Wednesday, May 5; rough draft due in class Thursday, April 29 for another 10 points as a separate in-class assignment): Students will choose to apply the perspective of any ONE of the following theorists to the individuals impacted in their chosen community: Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, B. F. Skinner, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, or Albert Bandura. A written paper will be submitted that describes how the theorist might view individuals' development as they are impacted by the needs of their community (e.g., homeless, being institutionalized or hospitalized, being raised by a single parent, living with a disability, etc.). In other words, address the psychological and developmental impact of being a member of this community through the eyes of the chosen theorist. This individual assignment is graded on timeliness; completeness and neatness; appropriateness of the applied theory; APA style (content and references); and spelling and grammar. (The rough draft will be graded on timeliness and completeness; it will not be turned in, but will be evaluated by classmates during class on April 29 as a separate in-class assignment.)

Part 4: JOURNAL (worth 10 points, due in class no later than Thursday, June 3): Once the group members have carried out their community project, each student will individually submit a written journal of their experiences that includes a description of their own participation (not the participation of others) in the project, their feelings about the project and how it was completed, and what they learned about their community and about themselves. The journal may be turned in at any time after the completion of the project, but no later than the due date of June 3. This assignment is graded on timeliness; demonstration of participation efforts; complete descriptions of feelings about the project and about what was learned about the community and self; and spelling and grammar.

Part 5: GROUP PRESENTATION (worth 50 points, due in class during the last few days of the quarter, dates to be determined based on the number of group projects): Each group will prepare a powerpoint presentation that describes their community, its needs, and the project they completed to meet those needs. The presentation will be approximately 20-25 minutes long and MUST include participation from each of the members of the group. The presentation is graded on equal participation of all group members; thoroughness of descriptions of the community, its needs, and the group's activities and results; speakers' demeanor, eye contact, clear speaking, and voice projection while presenting; organization of the topics presented; clearness and accurateness of the powerpoint slides and any other visual aids that might be used; good use of time; and how audience questions are handled.
INSTRUCTOR’S DESCRIPTION OF STUDENTS’ CAPSTONE PROJECT - SPRING, 2010

This quarter, the 18 enrolled students chose to do a single class project rather than doing several different small-group projects. The community they selected to help was the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery (VBCN) in Spokane, which serves to protect children at risk of being abused or neglected by family members. In their written plan for this project (part 2 on previous page) students wrote that the crisis nursery is a non-profit organization that helps children 0-6 years old. They work to improve the lives of children by providing immediate refuge, safety, and ongoing family support in an environment of unconditional love. The nursery needs anything from diapers, formula, and clothes, to toys and groceries.

The class organized and sponsored a break dance contest that was held at Salnave Elementary School in Cheney on Friday, May 21, and which involved several different break dance groups from Eastern Washington, including one group from EWU, who all volunteered their time at the request of the class members to make the project a success. They were able to raise over $250 and collected food, baby formula, clothing, and personal care items such as baby shampoo and diapers, all of which they donated to the crisis nursery. (See related story in the Easterner, but be aware that they reported us as being the Social Work capstone class rather than the CEDP capstone course!)
GRADING RUBRIC

Part 1: LIST OF COMMUNITIES AND NEEDS (worth 10 points total)
1 point list is turned in on time (1 point) or late (0 points)
3 points at least 3 different communities are identified (one point each)
3 points complete description of the 3 communities' needs is included (one point each)
3 points spelling and grammar is excellent (3 points); good but needs improvement (2 points); contains many errors (1 point); or very poor (0 points)

Part 2: WRITTEN PLAN (worth 10 points total)
2 points plan is on time (2 points); late x 1 day (1 point); more than 1 day late (0 points)
2 points community needs are described adequately (2 points); poorly (1 point); or overlooked (0 points)
2 points description of students' planned activities is adequate (2 points); poor (1 point); or overlooked (0 points)
2 points tentative timeline is described appropriately (2 points); poorly (1 point); or overlooked (0 points)
2 points spelling and grammar is excellent (2 points); good, but needs improvement (1 point); very poor (0 points)

Part 3: THEORIST PAPER (worth 20 points total)
3 points paper is on time (3 points); late x 1 day (2 points); late x 2 days (1 point); late x more than 2 days (0 points)
2 points paper is complete, given a title, and neatly typed (2 points); almost complete and/or not very neatly typed (1 point); mostly incomplete and/or very sloppy (0 points)
4 points theorist views are explained thoroughly and appropriately (4 points); slightly incomplete but appropriate or complete but slightly inappropriate (3 points); slightly incomplete and slightly inappropriate (2 points); very incomplete or very inappropriate (1 point); very incomplete and very inappropriate or overlooked (0 points)
4 points APA style is used for content and paper has no or very few minor mistakes (4 points); several minor mistakes (3 points); a few large mistakes that do not constitute plagiarism (2 points); many large mistakes that do not constitute plagiarism (1 point); many large mistakes that constitute plagiarism or no APA-style attempts at all (0 points)
4 points APA style is used for references page and student has at least 2 references with no or very few minor mistakes (4 points); several minor mistakes (3 points); a few large mistakes (2 points); many large mistakes (1 point); many large mistakes that constitute plagiarism or no APA-style references included (0 points)
3 points spelling and grammar is excellent (3 points); good but needs improvement (2 points); poor with a few major mistakes (1 point); very poor with several major mistakes (0 points)

Part 4: JOURNAL (worth 10 points total)
2 points journal is on time (2 points); late x 1 day (1 point); late x more than 1 day (0 points)
2 points student's rating of own participation activities is adequate (2 points); incomplete or poorly addressed (1 point); overlooked (0 points)
2 points student's feelings about the project are adequately described (2 points); poorly described (1 point); overlooked (0 points)
2 points description of what was learned about the community and the self is complete (2 points); incomplete (1 point); overlooked (0 points)
2 points spelling and grammar is excellent (2 points); good (1 point); poor (0 points)
GRADING RUBRIC (continued)

Part 5: GROUP PRESENTATION (worth 50 points total)
Up to 10 points  Group members were prepared to start on time; and they were enthusiastic (not appearing bored) by their own presentation, maintaining the audience’s attention well throughout the entire presentation.

Up to 10 points  Group members clearly identified and described the community they selected, the needs of that community, and how they planned for and attempted to meet those needs.

Up to 10 points  The content of the presentation was well-organized, clear to audience members, thorough, and informative; additionally, group members speculated about how the project either succeeded or could have been improved.

Up to 10 points  Powerpoint slides and overhead transparencies, skits, videos, posters, or other material was used to highlight the information presented by the group, and the group relied on more than simply talking about their project.

Up to 10 points  All group members played a role in the presentation and responsibility for the presentation and/or its preparation was distributed evenly among the group members.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: (based on 18 enrolled students)

Part 1: LIST OF COMMUNITIES AND NEEDS (worth 10 points total) (Class average 9.5 points = 95%)
10/18 (55.55%) students received 10 points = 100%
7/18 (38.88%) students received 9 points = 90%
1 student (5.55%) student received 8 points = 80%

Part 2: WRITTEN PLAN (worth 10 points) (Class average 10 points = 100%)
18/18 (100%) students received 10 points

Part 3: THEORIST PAPER (worth 20 points) (Class average 13.88 points = 69.44%)
1/18 (5.55%) student received 20 points = 100%
1/18 (5.55%) student received 19 points = 95%
2/18 (11.11%) students received 18 points = 90%
1/18 (5.55%) student received 17 points = 85%
2/18 (11.11%) students received 15 points = 75%
4/18 (22.22%) students received 14 points = 70%
4/18 (22.22%) students received 11 points = 55%
2/18 (11.11%) students received 10 points = 50%
1/18 (5.55%) students received 8 points = 40%

Part 4: JOURNAL (worth 10 points) (Class average 8.11 points = 81.11%)
3/18 (16.66%) students received 10 points = 100%
4/18 (22.22%) students received 9 points = 90%
6/18 (33.33%) students received 8 points = 80%
2/18 (11.11%) students received 7 points = 70%
3/18 (16.66%) students received 6 points = 60%

Part 5: Presentation (worth 50 points) (Class average 50 points = 100%)
18/18 (100%) students received 50 points
INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS:

Part 1: LIST OF COMMUNITIES AND NEEDS (worth 10 points)

The class average of 95% on this part of the capstone project was excellent. Over half the class (55.55% of all students) earned full credit for this assignment, by receiving 10/10 points (100%), while the rest of the students earned either 8/10 points (80%) or 9/10 points (90%). The main reasons for students to miss one or two points was because of spelling and grammar errors or because they did not thoroughly describe the assumed needs of one or more of the three communities they were to write about. Overall, because they all earned 80% or higher, part 1 was completed highly satisfactorily. To improve next time, however, I might encourage students to check each other's papers in rough draft form for errors and oversights before turning in a final copy for grading. Additionally, I could remind students of the services provided by the writers' center on campus, which might encourage some of them to utilize those services and could potentially improve the grades even more.

Part 2: WRITTEN PLAN (worth 10 points)

The class average on this part of the capstone project was 100%. Because the class of 18 students chose to complete a single class project rather than two or more smaller group projects, they were allowed to turn in a single written plan, signed by all 18 students, which is why they all received the same grade for this assignment. The plan was on time and all requirements were met, so the entire class shares the same grade of 10/10 points, or 100%. No changes on this assignment are indicated.

Part 3: THEORIST PAPER (worth 20 points)

The class average on this part of the capstone project was clearly the lowest of all five parts (69.44%). Only one student earned full credit for this assignment, and a total of 4 students (22.22% of the class) earned 90% or above. On the other hand, eleven students (61.11% of the class) earned a score of 70% or less, with one student earning only 8/20 points (40%), which indicates that improvements can definitely be made.

The main reasons for poor performances on this assignment are exceedingly poor spelling and grammar, usually coupled with very poor use of correct APA style in the content and/or the references section of the paper. Seven students' papers (38.88% of all papers) contained errors that constituted plagiarism, and those students were asked to rewrite their papers and to make corrections accordingly, although they were NOT provided with a better, higher grade for doing so. Two other students' papers (11.11% of all papers) were rewritten because of severe problems with spelling and grammar, and they also were not given a higher, better grade for doing so. (Students were told they would receive a grade of zero for this part of the project if they did not rewrite problematic papers, and all who were required to do so, rewrote them.)

Although students were provided several previous assignments not related to the capstone project that required them to practice using correct spelling and grammar and appropriate APA style of writing, including another research paper that was graded similarly but which was worth more points, the students still seemed to write poor papers for this particular assignment. Perhaps including even more opportunities to practice writing in APA style for other assignments should be considered.

Students were also told that a “free critique of your paper is provided if you turn in a rough draft” to the teacher earlier than the due date, and only one student used this opportunity to have me preview her paper ahead of time. This student eventually earned 19/20 points, which seems to indicate that she took my advice about what to address in her final draft. Had more students taken me up on this offer, perhaps more of them would have earned grades higher than 70%. All students were required, however, to bring a rough draft to class several days before the final draft was due, but I did not critique these papers individually except to answer specific questions that they asked of me; instead, the students exchanged papers with each other to offer their own critiques. I must assume that many of the errors and plagiarism situations were missed by the students, who shared their papers with others whose papers likely contained similar errors.

To improve on the students' performance with this assignment in the future, I might require all students to turn in a rough draft well in advance in order for me to outline needed corrections that they should address before the final draft is turned in. I might increase their motivation to do this by offering points for the rough draft and/or extra credit points for a well-written rough draft. Also, a visit to the EWU writers' center should be suggested or required for all students' papers before completing the final draft.
INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS (continued):

Part 4: JOURNAL (worth 10 points)

Most students did well on this part of the project, as evidenced by a class average of 81.11%, with 3/18 students (16.66% of the class) earning 100% and only 5/18 students (27.77% of the class) earning 70% or 60%. The main reasons for points being deducted from the total possible with this assignment included spelling and grammar errors and/or a failure to address one or more of the required issues, such as describing what they learned about their chosen community or about themselves or describing how their project impacted the community.

To improve scores on the journals in the future, students might be asked to use a checklist of the requirements to ensure that they do not leave important information out. They should also be encouraged to visit EWU’s writers’ center for help with grammatical structures and spelling. I could have allowed for a “free critique” of the journals, as I did for the theorist papers, which might also have prompted some students to share their rough drafts with me in time to make needed corrections before the final draft was due.

Part 5: PRESENTATION (worth 50 points)

The class average was 100% on this part of the project because, like the written plan, it was ONE presentation for the entire group, which was made up of the entire class. I opted not to divide them into smaller groups, but allowed them instead to divide the material into parts and form subgroups for the topics they were to present on. However, I opted to grade the entire presentation in total rather than break it into smaller group grades. Because their powerpoint presentation was outstanding and all requirements were met, the entire class received the same grade of 50/50 points (100%) on this assignment. No improvements are indicated at this time.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

It is evident that students in this capstone course have had few or inadequate opportunities to learn and practice writing professionally, particularly in APA style. I spend a lot of time teaching the differences between quoting and paraphrasing, for example, and telling students about what constitutes plagiarism. They frequently have serious problems with spelling and grammar, and even though I spend time in class talking about things like incomplete and run-on sentences, students still do not take the initiative or have the ability to write papers properly. I believe there is much more I can address as the instructor for this course, as outlined in my interpretation of the results above, and I am open to other suggestions for improving students’ writing skills.

Overall, however, I would describe the performances of students on this particular capstone project as outstanding, considering that the purpose was to find a need in the community, then find a way to address that need in a positive manner. They were able to make significant contributions to the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery, despite their poor writing skills. So, I believe the project was indeed a success!