Data Based Decision Making

Direct Data - Portfolios

Starting in the Spring of 2016, graduating ITLS students created a portfolio of projects, papers, reports, assessments and deliverables they created during the course of their graduate education. After completing the portfolio, students self-assess the combination of artifacts as a demonstration of their own ability with respect to five professional standards from the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) on a four point scale. In the aggregate students are meeting expectations. In the case of content knowledge and learning environments students are exceeding expectations.

AECT Standard	Spring 2016 (n=11)	Summer 2016 (n=18)
AECT Standard 1 - Content Knowledge Candidates demonstrate the knowledge necessary to create, use, assess, and manage theoretical and practical applications of educational technologies and processes.	2.80	3.11
AECT Standard 2 - Content Pedagogy Candidates develop as reflective practitioners able to demonstrate effective implementation of educational technologies and processes based on contemporary content and pedagogy.	2.77	2.56
AECT Standard 3 - Learning Environments Candidates facilitate learning by creating, using, evaluating, and managing effective learning environments.	2.99	2.72
AECT Standard 4 - Professional Knowledge & Skills Candidates design, develop, implement, and evaluate technology-rich learning environments within a supportive community of practice.	2.83	3.00
AECT Standard 5 - Research Candidates explore, evaluate, synthesize, and apply methods of inquiry to enhance learning and improve performance	2.93	2.72

0-.99 attempting beginning	1-1.99 strong effort	2-2.99 meeting expectations	3-4 exceeding expectations

Data Based Decision Making is done throughout the year with key strategic conversations conducted at annual retreats and then acted on by the Department Head, program coordinator, and staff in addition to the faculty curriculum committee or other faculty working groups. While directly observed data aligned with professional standards are emerging in part as a response to an internal review at USU preparing for NWCCU accreditation. Review of indirect (such as the department dashboard) and other direct data (such as the annual PhD review) resulted in several data based revisions to various programs. Recent changes include the following:

- Committed to requiring our orientation class based on review of literature for all, including distance students. Starting in a cohort with a face to face experience is related to improved graduation rates.
- Modified the Research & Evaluation course and made it part of the Master's core requirements based on an identified lack of evaluation and assessment skills in existing curriculum.
- Dropped second semester of Instructional Design from the Master's core and made it an elective class to free up space for the research and evaluation course.
- Reduction of pro-seminar from two semesters (6 credits) to a single semester (3 credits) to allow students and their advisors increased autonomy in creating a program of study.
- Driven by our annual PhD review faculty identified that some students were struggling to transition from comprehensive exams to proposal writing, collecting data and then writing and defending their finished dissertation. Since **Research is a core AECT standard**, faculty worked hard to make the following programmatic revisions:
  - Revised comprehensive exams to consist of one theoretical/conceptual paper and one empirical paper as opposed to five papers aligned to various cognates. Papers are then orally defended and students are required to present on at a professional conference.
  - Asked faculty teaching pro-seminar sessions to meaningfully engage students in some feature of their own research practice (coding data, reviewing conference proposals, etc . . .)
  - Modified practicum classes for doctoral students to allow for authentic experiences (such as a graduate research or graduate teaching assistantship) as a reasonable replacement.
  - All of these changes are an effort to engage students in meaningful research activities, and mentor them in research that closely approximates the efforts of scholars and practitioners.
- Cognitively demanding online classes, such as the advanced Instructional Design class and Socio-Cultural Learning Theory have migrated to a synchronous video format so that graduate students can engage with their faculty member in meaningful and structured discussions.
- Directly observed portfolio data will be used to find and address gaps in the existing curriculum after more information is available.