Cantigny Conference Report

Re-Visioning Articulation: Linkages in the Continuum of Students' Success

The Wheelock College
Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives

Funded by the McCormick Tribune Foundation

Cantigny Conference Conveners

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Background

Research on early childhood programs shows that children achieve better outcomes with teachers who have higher levels of education/training. Additionally, early childhood practitioners with more education tend to stay in the early childhood education field longer than practitioners with less education. Staff retention promotes continuity among adults and children, which is a key factor in children's healthy development. Low staff turnover provides the basis for building staff/parent partnerships that enhance children's learning.

Because consistent, well-educated teachers and providers are the most important factor in determining program quality and outcomes for children, improving the education of early childhood practitioners is a matter of considerable importance. Concerned that credit and program transfer problems are limiting practitioners' educational attainment, policy-makers, funders, and other sectors are calling for a comprehensive review of how we prepare early childhood practitioners and provide continued learning to practicing professionals. Improved linkages among higher education institutions and between the secondary and post-secondary sectors are key to creating early childhood professional development systems that assist aspiring and practicing early childhood educators to make a smooth transition from one educational level to the next without experiencing loss of credit, duplication of courses, and delay in educational advancement.

Several states have made significant strides in identifying and addressing some of the obstacles that block practitioners' educational progress. To date, however, no state has designed a comprehensive approach that creates linkages along the entire continuum of early childhood training and education, from high school vocational programs to certificate programs to accredited courses of study for college degrees.

"Articulation" Defined

In higher education, the term "articulation" refers to recognition of a student's prior learning experiences. Most commonly, articulation involves agreements between higher education institutions that allow students to earn credit or complete a program of study at one institution and have that credit or program completion counted toward fulfillment of their degree requirements by the college or university to which they transfer. The term "articulation" also refers to processes

adopted by some institutions to assess prior non-college learning experiences for credit purposes. "Prior learning" (also referred to as "non-traditional learning" or "extra-institutional learning") indicates learning that occurs outside the college or university; it can encompass non-credit training or on-the-job learning or other forms of experiential learning. To initiate discussion and strategies to increase the educational attainment of early childhood practitioners, we propose to define articulation in the broadest sense–namely, *linkages that encourage student entry into higher education from multiple pathways as well as enhance student mobility between higher education institutions.*

Improving higher education articulation requires a sustained, collaborative effort that may call into question certain institutional assumptions about the teaching and learning process. People who represent different training and education sectors–high schools, technical schools, apprenticeship programs, child care resource and referral, two- and four-year colleges/universities, experiential learning, alternative education programs, on-the-job training, and distance learning–must convene with open minds, mutual respect, and cooperation to arrive at an inclusive vision and set of linkages, or articulation mechanisms, between institutions and educational sectors that acknowledge and unify an early childhood practitioner's disparate and meaningful learning experiences. Ultimately, children and families are likely to benefit as greater articulation allows for new syntheses of theory and practice in early childhood teacher preparation and continued education.

Purpose of the Cantigny Conference

To advance an expansive approach to articulation that considers the full complement of learning that contributes to professional proficiency, the McCormick Tribune Foundation contracted with the Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives to plan and implement a conference of individuals who offered a wide range of expertise in articulation issues and strategies. From 26 states, the 50 selected participants who were brought together at the Cantigny estate (Wheaton, Illinois) in October, 2002 represented the range of stakeholders in early childhood professional development, including two- and four-year colleges and universities, early childhood practitioners, community-based training programs, child care resource and referral agencies, professional organizations, state education agencies, career development programs, and funders. Conference attendees also reflected the cultural and language spectrum found among

early childhood educators as well as children and families served in early childhood programs. A comprehensive resolution of articulation issues requires that we consider how social attributes such as, culture, race, language, class, and gender affect educational achievement.

Conference objectives included:

- to explore key issues and barriers to students' success in completion of educational pursuits;
- to identify what type of support and communication is needed for successful articulation to be developed and maintained;
- to explore and develop strategies for creating an accessible pathway to career mobility for early childhood educators and facilitate movement from one level of education to another;
- to identify places where collaboration can and should take place;

Conference planning and preparation

A representative 14-member committee (see Appendix A for roster) was responsible for advising Wheelock Institute staff on the planning, execution, and evaluation of the conference agenda. To aid in planning the conference, three separate focus group discussions were conducted by conference call to identify key articulation issues and strategies.

From the planning committee and focus group discussions, the following key articulation problems emerged, which then became the core of the conference agenda:

Issue 1: Linkage between associate and baccalaureate degree programs

Issue 2: Credit for prior learning experiences

Issue 3: Need for support services to promote students' success

Issue 4: Lack of diversity among higher education faculty and staff

Issue 5: Language as a barrier to student success

Discussion papers were co-authored by two individuals on each topic. These papers, along with an overview paper, were distributed to participants prior to the conference, and provided background for conference discussions.

Purpose of this Report

The October 2002 Cantigny Conference was an important early step in what is certain to be an arduous journey to arrive at a fully articulated professional development system in early childhood education. This report of the conference proceedings sheds light on articulation problems that pose barriers to practitioners' educational goal formulation and progress. This record of conference attendees' reflections and insights suggests possible steps and directions that policy-makers, training programs and educational institutions, funders, and early childhood practitioners can take and promote to improve transfer and articulation policies.

"We need to internalize the notion of leave no adult behind, or leave no young adult behind. Do we think that there is a body of young adults and adults and continuing education adults whom we could just cast aside?"

Maurice Sykes, University of the District of Columbia

Problem Statement

Today, early childhood programs face challenges of unparalleled magnitude:

- **Working parents:** Parents of young children represent a growing percentage of the workforce in the United States. Given that two out of three (65%) mothers with children under age six are working, early childhood staff recruitment, training, and retention are critical to early childhood program expansion.
- **Diversity:** Growing cultural and linguistic diversity across the United States poses additional staffing needs. Early childhood programs are experiencing difficulty in finding staff who are from the community and fluent in the primary languages of families served.
- **Poverty:** As poverty increases, programs have the responsibility to meet the developmental and educational needs of a growing number of children who experience adversity and stress in their daily lives. Poverty impairs children's healthy development and learning. Early childhood practitioners must have the knowledge base and experience to effectively strengthen children's resiliency, give them opportunities to learn and thrive, and provide appropriate support to their families.
- **School readiness:** Early childhood programs are charged with being first responders to growing concern that nearly half of young children entering kindergarten lack basic academic skills. Lack of school readiness leads to poor school performance and restricted job and life options. Research has established that children who attend good early childhood programs tend to be more intellectually, socially, and emotionally prepared to adjust to kindergarten and later school than children who are not enrolled in good programs. Consistent, well-trained, and well-compensated teachers are the most important factor in achieving these positive outcomes for children.

In their consideration of the early childhood labor force, public policy-makers have been almost exclusively concerned with availability, not competence or stability. Positive outcomes for children can only be expected, however, if early childhood programs are staffed with practitioners who are well trained in child development and early childhood education and representative of the families and children served.

Yet, prospective and current early childhood professionals encounter a multitude of barriers that thwart their educational progress. We must create smooth, efficient educational pathways that address the needs, abilities, and interests of prospective and

current practitioners, make better use of institutional resources by reducing duplication, and ultimately improve early childhood program quality for the betterment of children, their families, and communities.

Testimony of Four Students

The conference began with four female participants' accounts of their educational efforts to advance their professional competency and qualifications. Each person was asked to list three words that best described her educational experiences, highlight experiences related to one of the words, and then identify factors that helped them along their educational journey.

Beverly Tate, a doctoral student at the University of Miami, chose *rigorous*, *painful*, and *status quo* to characterize her learning experiences. Singling out the word *status quo*, she noted higher education programs tend to be designed for the full-time student and the courses she took were, for the most part, traditional in both content and approach to learning. Most college programs fail to consider the needs of part-time students who are attempting to achieve a balance between work/family and school that allows for excellence in both areas. Participating in the educational process as a student has been transformative for her in that she has been able to apply her firsthand experience as a student to understand and empathize with the community college students enrolled in courses she teaches.

Susana Taylor, a student pursuing her associate degree at Contra Costa College in California, selected *difficult*, *frustrating*, and *rewarding* as her three words. She described her feelings of *frustration* as she struggles to gain proficiency in English as a second language. In addition, she noted that the educational system fails to recognize anything that one has done or accomplished prior to entering college. She has a wealth of knowledge that she brought from her country of origin, but due to lack of continuity between her education there and her course of study here, she had to start all over again. In college, she has benefited from the linkage of early childhood education courses with English as a second language courses. The same text was used and tutorial support was provided. Her current work at the English Action Center with people coming from other countries has been very fulfilling.

Nelida Torres, a family child care provider working toward her associate degree at Springfield Technical Community College in Massachusetts, stated that *unity*, *struggle*, and *quality* most aptly described her educational experiences. Highlighting the *struggle* to advance in her profession, she noted that, as a family child care provider, few learning opportunities were available to help her grow professionally. She has been active in the Latino Family Child Care Association, a provider-driven organization that has united area providers to overcome many obstacles. The Association is engaged in an ongoing struggle at Springfield Technical Community College to have courses offered in Spanish and to find appropriate instructors for such courses. Having received instruction in Spanish, she must shoulder the added burden of having to demonstrate that she can apply knowledge she has acquired in her primary language in her work with young children. While it can be difficult serving families and even one's own family in the family child care role, the Latino Association has enabled providers to work together on common concerns and provide support to one another. In her work mobilizing her peers and building a sense of community, she has gained knowledge, skills, and self-confidence. Noting the importance of culturally, linguistically, rele-

vant professional development, she stated that experienced providers should serve as mentors and share their expertise with new providers.

Veronica Ortiz, a student working on her baccalaureate degree in Oregon, named *frustrating*, *confusing*, and *discouraging* as the three words best describing her educational experiences. She faced *discouragement* living in a small town in Oregon and had difficulty finding time to work and to go to school. Feeling that many educational doors were closed to her, she has made progress toward her early childhood educational goals with the support of Head Start, which provided her with tutorial assistance and financial help for tuition, books, and other expenses.

The four attendees' testimonies set the stage and defined the contextual tone for the conference by naming the issues in relation to everyday lived experience. Their moving accounts stirred participants' passion and sense of urgency in the re-visioning of articulation to ensure student success and, consequently, provide higher quality services to children and families. Hearing firsthand the struggles and real-life experiences of the women became an important backdrop and motivator for the work of the next two days.

"Every institution has a basic philosophy that leads the students or stops the students, that provides options or limits options, and we don't know if people really think about what that philosophy is."

Marsha Shigeyo Hawley, Erikson Institute

Getting Started: Multiple Issues, Different Perspectives

Through engagement in panel presentations, and small and large group discussions, conference participants began to identify the following set of key points to unify and direct articulation efforts. These four points provide a basis of understanding, a framework for discussion and development of ways to achieve better articulation.

Point

1 Higher education institutions must become more responsive to the needs, interests, resources, and circumstances of people enrolled in their programs.

Aspiring and practicing early childhood practitioners generally do not have a lot of financial resources, latitude in time to pursue their educational goals, or means to travel to school. Many students in post-secondary early childhood education programs have full-time jobs and are active in religious, civic, and other community organizations. Many early childhood education students are heads of single-parent households and must shoulder other family responsibilities.

Higher education faculty and administrators tend to be insulated from the day-to-day realities of students' lives. Higher education is often perceived as having an "ivory tower" attitudinal orientation where institutional policies and practices loom as obstacles instead of steps to educational success. In some cases, early childhood education departments insist on a sequence of courses that is out of sync with state staff qualification guidelines. To educate the numbers of qualified, well-trained early childhood practitioners that our society needs, higher education institutions must become more student-centered.

Many states have higher education funding formulas that are based on enrollment. Consequently, programs are often designed to keep the student enrolled for a longer period of time. As stated by Tom Root of the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education, "As long as higher education funding is based on enrollment, there's a reward system in place that essentially says what matters is warm bodies. Higher education funding agencies need to create a reward system that requires institutions to pay attention to the issues that matter to the people who live in their communities." With few financial supports in place and little prospect of earning enough money to pay off sizable loans, preservice and practicing early childhood educators cannot afford lost time, unnecessary

costs, and duplication from lack of articulation between higher education institutions.

Moreover, a common sentiment among early childhood education students is that college curricula are often disconnected from the realities of working in early childhood programs. In class, students may view videotapes of university-sponsored laboratory programs that often do not speak to the challenges that early childhood educators face in community-based settings. To meet the educational needs and interests of their students, higher education institutions must take a self-critical look at how responsive they are to the lives of their students and to the people who students want to serve.

Point

2 A comprehensive approach to articulation entails acknowledgement and validation of multiple integrated educational pathways, with different entry points for achieving educational goals.

To attract and retain students with diverse cultural, socio-economic, educational, and experiential backgrounds, we envision multiple early childhood education pathways with a variety of entry points. This system should accommodate both pre-service students and practicing early childhood educators, without consigning adult learners to a separate route. To help students make informed decisions, we need to develop a clear roadmap that delineates the multiple routes from which students can choose according to their specific circumstances.

Articulation must cast the widest net possible to "catch" the prior learning experiences of early childhood education students. It must extend to validation of prior education that immigrants received in their country of origin. In some cases, immigrants with advanced degrees have been expected to start their post-secondary education over again. Higher education admissions offices must recognize that immigrants may not be able to produce transcripts and other documentation, in some cases, because of the political repression that drove a prospective student from their country.

It is important that we establish institutional environments that engender successful first academic experiences wherever they occur. We need to question reliance on tests alone in making initial placement decisions. Placement tests are inherently culturally biased. When administered to students whose primary language is not English, tests indicate more about their English language proficiency than their knowledge level. Placement determinations should be grounded in adult learning theory and based on student potential rather than on their limitations. Inappropriate placement decisions can result in student discouragement and withdrawal from the educational program and perhaps the early childhood education field.

Point

3 People must have access to information that they need to achieve individual success and/or to effect change.

Articulation problems often stem from lack of information. In some cases, institution-to-institution articulation agreements fail to produce results because students and faculty are not aware of their existence. Faculty may not even know about articulation agreements negotiated by their own department/program. Detailed information about inter-institutional articulation agreements should be published in official college/university catalogs.

In regard to student access to information, Jerlean Daniel of the University of Pittsburgh noted, "It's not good enough to be an insider slipping secrets to students. As an insider, we should be tearing the walls down. We have to challenge our colleagues."

Each state has a different sense of urgency and mission about articulation. To advise public policy-makers on where to go and how to get there, advocates need more information, particularly background about other professions that have created successful transfer and articulation policies. Progress in resolving articulation problems is hampered by a lack of data on student progress: for example, what is the average time span for student arrival at different educational benchmarks, what are the characteristics of students who make the least and the most progress, what factors into student enrollment in a two-year or a four-year college, what factors arrest student educational advancement?

Point

4 Re-visioning articulation and creating a more responsive, representative educational system is a process of social change.

We tend to consider articulation as only a systems problem–that, like a machine, we simply have to tinker here, make adjustments there, and lubricate some of the moving parts. To keep with the analogy, articulation is about who designs and runs the machine. Establishing person-to-person relationships based upon mutual trust and respect has proved to be an essential ingredient in crafting successful articulation strategies. Full-fledged articulation requires relationship-building among students, with faculty, within institutions, and between institutions and the community. For example, community colleges and universities, especially those in the public sector, must initiate discussion as equal partners and develop uninterrupted pathways between associate degree programs and four-year baccalaureate degree programs that are based upon student need, not institutional interests.

Advancing articulation across the country will require a sustained, broad-based effort guided by a diverse leadership. In the process, we need to engage and support new leaders that represent and understand the needs of children and families in their communities. We must work to ensure that student leaders are at the table along with faculty and administrators in planning how to better serve students. To this end, we have to develop ways to train students to become advocates for themselves and for other early childhood educators. We have to assist emergent leaders to view themselves as leaders and help them acquire the knowledge, expertise, and self-confidence to effectively work with faculty and administrators toward better articulation.

Making meaningful gains in articulation will by no means be an easy task. While student and institutional goals may be harmonious, short-term interests can deflect discussion into intense disagreement. All stakeholders have to "keep their eyes on the prize"–that is, maximizing the educational attainment of prospective and practicing early childhood educators to be able to offer good early childhood programs for all young children. Sustained discussion, involving listening to different perspectives, negotiating differences, and building consensus, is the precursor to the changes that need to take place. In framing issues such as equity and diversity, stakeholders are likely to enter the conversation with different levels of understanding; therefore, timeframes should allow adequate time for dialogue and listening to take place.

As stated by educational consultant Sally Curtis, "We want to move from power struggles to power sharing." Models of student-driven articulation practices benefit both students and the institutions they attend. Institutions can more efficiently use limited resources by offering complementary rather than competing programs. In the long run, an integrated educational system is more likely to garner the support of policy-makers, funders, and the public.

"We can establish institutional environments to create successful first academic experiences no matter where they occur, while at the same time recognizing that learning is truly a lifelong process. We can encourage learners throughout their process of learning to continue their education, to learn more, even if that learning will occur at another institution. Each institution must develop a process for validating prior learning."

Marjorie Bakken, President, Wheelock College

Analysis of Key Issues of Articulation

This section is a composite of thoughts and initial recommendations generated by participants at the conference, along with ideas drawn from the issue papers. While attendees did not have sufficient time to finalize a set of recommendations, the following summaries of issues suggest steps to better articulation.

Issue:

1 Linkage between associate and baccalaureate degree programs

Summary of issue

Articulation is the process by which a student can transfer educational credits, certificates, degrees, and validation of prior learning from one institution to another. Inter-institutional articulation agreements generally operate at two levels. Perhaps most familiar is the agreement involving the transfer of credit based on course equivalencies. Articulation agreements may also be based on program-to-program equivalencies.

The problematic nature of articulation between two- and four-year degree programs in early childhood education has been a longstanding barrier to the professional development of early childhood educators. When students transfer from two-year colleges to four-year institutions, transferability of credit is frequently problematic. In many cases, the institution to which the student is transferring often requires them to repeat courses in which they have achieved an acceptable grade. Transferability of credit has also been a problem when students make lateral transfers to another community college or another four-year college.

Historically, two divergent philosophies have moved community colleges in different directions: the community college as a vocational-technical school and the community college as a junior college that essentially offers a lower-division baccalaureate program. Consequently, there are three types of associate degrees; namely, Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Science (A.S.), and Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.). In many states because A.S. and A.A.S. degree programs are based on the vocational-technical school model and coursework requirements are more heavily weighted toward early childhood education courses than most A.A. degree programs are, a student with an A.S. or A.A.S. degree is unlikely to be granted full credit for prior study when transferring to a baccalaureate degree program. At a baccalaureate degree-granting institution, most early childhood education courses are typically

offered in the junior or senior year. A recent study in North Carolina found that after completion of a two-year A.A.S. degree program in early childhood education, many promising teachers of young children were denied access to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions unless they were willing to begin their higher education over again.

In some state systems of higher education, two- and four-year institutions work together to assure that the sequence of courses to be completed to fulfill associate degree requirements at the community college is comparable to general education and lower-division requirements in designated baccalaureate majors.

Challenges

- Associate degree programs are often marginalized by policymakers and baccalaureate degree program faculty and administrators, who question the quality, scope, and rigor of community college courses.
- Because, for the most part, individual institutions develop articulation agreements with one another, there is great variability in the scope, conditions, and visibility of such agreements.
- Most states lack an adequate mechanism for approval of early childhood education and child development credits among public institutions of higher education.
- In several states, where articulation of associate degrees has been mandated by the state legislature, articulation agreements may satisfy legislative requirements but fall short of student needs and expectations. Additionally, the A.S. and A.A.S. degrees are often not covered by such state mandates and their articulation remains contingent upon negotiations between individual two-year colleges and four-year institutions.
- Although an A.A.S. degree is highly valuable for working practitioners because of its curricular emphasis on early childhood-related courses, some A.A.S. degrees are unfortunately designated as *terminal degrees*.

Possible steps

(1) Work to establish mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among early childhood education faculty across institutional and education sector boundaries:

- Conduct in-depth discussions on the value system that ranks degrees and credentials and how it is grounded in class bias and elitism.
- Establish multiple ways in which inter-institutional and cross-sector communication can occur, including one-on-one and department-to-department meetings, classroom visits, team teaching, joint instructional appointments, co-presentations, advisory committees, guest speakers, faculty institutes and other training forums, and joint recruitment of students.

(2) Promote articulation agreements on the local, state, and national levels:

- Convene early childhood education faculty, administrators, and students from different institutions and different educational sectors to seek agreement on core competencies and course content and sequencing, identify course and program equivalencies, and develop clearly stated guidelines and procedures for course and program articulation and the transfer of credit.
- Ensure inclusion of *all* colleges, including tribal colleges located on reservations, historically black colleges and universities, and A.S. and A.A.S. degree-granting colleges, in creating articulation linkages for degree attainment.
- Include certification programs such as

the Child Development Associate and Apprenticeship in Child Development Specialist programs.
- Review education/training preparation in other professions, such as nursing, for examples of successful inter-institutional articulation agreements.
- Review voluntary statewide articulation agreements such as the Illinois Articulation Initiative in which 110 two- and four-year Illinois public and independent institutions participate.
- Create pilot articulation initiatives that oblige institutions within a statewide system to observe policies and procedures for course and program articulation and the transfer of credit.
- Consider a national articulation initiative with higher education governance.

(3) Support and broaden participation and scope of the ongoing communication between American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (ACCESS) and the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE) at the national, state, regional, and local levels.
- Make personal commitments to participate and encourage participation by colleagues.
- Ensure that issues such as diversity of students, the needs of students whose first language is not English, and representative faculty are part of the agenda.
- Support development and implementation of the ACCESS/NAEYC accreditation process of Associate Degree programs in early childhood.

(4) Eliminate the concept of "terminal degrees."

Note: For specific examples of articulation initiatives undertaken by higher education institutions, see *Students, Degrees, Diversity: A Case for Articulation*, written by Bruce Stam, with editorial assistance from Maurice Sykes.

Issue:

2 Credit for prior learning experiences

Summary of the issue

Because state regulations on early childhood program staff qualifications tend to be minimal, many early childhood practitioners begin working in the field with little or no post-secondary education. Practitioners moving up through a career lattice accumulate a variety of prior learning experiences and attend an eclectic mix of in-service training, workshops, and conferences. Practitioners often take community-based, non-credit training because of topical interest, timing, accessibility, and cost. Unfortunately, most of their training experiences do not count toward college degrees.

For more than 20 years in the U.S. and around the world, prior learning assessment (PLA) has provided educational access and opportunity. Noncollegiate-sponsored training may be quantified in a number of ways: non-credit, clock hours, credit through college extension services, or college credit from community colleges. Nevertheless, few colleges and universities assess and award credit for prior learning.

Challenges

- There is wide variation in institutional policies regarding evaluation of prior learning for credit; some institutions that confer credit for prior learning do not use existing standardized Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) guidelines.
- Only 25% of the colleges offering degrees in early childhood education award credit for the nationally-recognized Child Development Associate credential (CDA), notwithstanding the fact that Head Start

made the CDA a core credential in its national staff development plan. To date, approximately 135,000 early childhood practitioners have been awarded this credential; yet, most two-year and four-year higher education institutions do not offer college credits for the CDA credential.

- Many higher education institutions express concerns about quality assurance.
- In many institutions, there is insufficient administrative support for prior learning assessment. Colleges and universities may harbor economic fears that granting credit for prior learning will reduce course enrollment.
- Lacking is a comprehensive, standardized process for defining what kinds of prior learning experiences warrant evaluation for credit purposes and for evaluating recognized prior learning for credit.
- Where assessment of prior learning entails portfolio development, the student must possess considerable skills in organization, reflection, analysis, synthesis, and written documentation to demonstrate college-level learning. There has been learner resistance to the rigor and associated costs of assessment of prior learning for credit.

Possible steps

(1) Encourage higher education institutions to establish clearly stated standards and procedures for assessing and awarding credit for prior noncollegiate learning.

- Review examination/assessment practices being used in higher education institutions to evaluate and grant college-level credit for prior learning experiences. Secure information about the students who have been awarded credit for prior learning.
- Encourage higher education institutions to include information about credit by examination/assessment policies and procedures in official college/university catalogs.

(2) Promote the development of standardized guidelines and procedures for determination of the credit value of prior learning that are based on best practice:

- Secure research information from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and other organizations.
- Urge national professional organizations to adopt CAEL best practices for portfolio development and assessment.
- Develop and submit research-backed recommendations to award credit for specific noncollegiate-sponsored instruction for inclusion in College Credit Recommendations: The Directory of the National Program on Noncollegiate-Sponsored Instruction (P.O.N.S.I.) and the National Guide to Education Credit for Training Programs (American Council on Education College Credit Recommendation Service).
- Encourage higher education institutions to work together to develop standardized or widely-accepted examinations/assessment procedures for assessing prior learning.
- Recommend to a higher education authority, such as the American Council on Education, that states institute systems to determine the credit value of noncollegiate-sponsored training (e.g. CDA Credential and Administrator Credential training; training forums that confer Continuing Education Units) to standardize evaluation of prior learning for credit.

Note: For specific examples of work on conferring credit for prior learning, see the issue paper entitled *Using Portfolio-based Assessment to Accelerate Credentialing*, by Elizabeth Jones and Cecelia McDaniel.

Issue:

3 Need for support services to promote students' success

Summary

Adult students face the daily challenges of juggling multiple roles: student, full- or part-time worker, family member/parent, and community member. To be truly inclusive, higher education institutions have to take an integrated approach to academic programming and student support. An array of specially designed services is needed to assist the (mostly) adult learners to be successful in the higher education arena.

Challenges

Students face a host of barriers; the obstacles are all the more daunting if a student is low-income, a second-language learner, or member of a cultural community that is underrepresented at the higher education institution.

- **Personal barriers:** Living in a highly materialistic society, many low-income people internalize their inability to live up to media-created images and may experience a sense of personal failure. Just as we know that a poor self-concept can hamper a child's development and learning, so can low self-esteem interfere with an adult's continuing education.
- **Physical barriers:** Unavailability of public transportation, lack of access to a reliable car, and inability to make other transportation arrangements to travel to and from college can make class attendance problematic.
- **Social barriers:** The student in early childhood education must cope with the prevailing social perception that work in the early childhood field requires little specialized knowledge, skills, or compensation beyond minimum wage.
- **Language barriers:** Second-language learners may not have full proficiency in English and therefore may have difficulty reading course texts, writing papers, and understanding and expressing themselves in class discussion.
- **Cultural barriers:** A student may encounter major points of divergence between the belief system of their own culture and the curricular content of an early childhood education course (e.g., attitudes toward toilet training, health and safety concerns, child guidance, expectations about children's behavior in social situations).
- **Educational barriers:** Many low-income students and students of color attend underfunded, neglected public schools where they receive poor-quality education that does not adequately prepare them for college-level academic work.
- **Financial barriers:** With the limited availability of scholarships, grants, and other forms of financial assistance, all too often enrollment in higher education programs imposes a financial hardship on adult students and their families.
- **Systems barriers:** Higher education institutions can be bureaucratic places where change happens at a snail's pace. Some college early childhood education departments have outdated curricula and professors who are less informed about current research, legislation, and developments in early childhood education than practicing early childhood students who take their courses.

Possible steps

(1) Provide individualized professional development career advising at critical points along educational pathways (e.g., high school to community college to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution):

- Provide students with maps of the multiple educational pathways to help them make informed decisions.
- Assign advisors to students upon their entry into an early childhood education program to assist them in mapping out educational goals and an educational plan to achieve them. Advisors can also serve as coaches and advocates at critical junctures.
- Provide mentors to help students navigate the institution and access available support services.

(2) Enhance and tailor support services to accommodate the diverse needs of students:

- Include students, faculty, and early childhood practitioners from the community in planning student support services.
- Make support services available to students at non-traditional hours (e.g., evenings, weekends).
- Form advisory committees that include student members who, with information from student surveys and other student feedback, review the quality of the early childhood education program and appropriateness and comprehensiveness of support services.
- Staff student support services with people who have diverse backgrounds, are representative of students served, and are fluent in the primary languages spoken by students.
- Develop adult reentry programs that have the capacity to serve members of diverse cultural and linguistic communities.
- Develop the institutional capacity to be able to match students who are second-language learners with advisors who are fluent in the student's first language.

(3) Integrate academic programming and student support to address the educational needs of students from underrepresented groups:

- Offer courses, course sequences, and programs of study at times and locations (e.g., off-campus sites) that accommodate the different needs of students (e.g., students with work/family responsibilities).
- Offer compressed courses as needed.
- Develop online and distance approaches to learning that incorporate on-campus and off-campus learning centers.
- Provide tutorial support to students from underrepresented groups (e.g. students with learning disabilities, second-language learners with poor high school preparation); build the capacity to provide tutoring to students in their first language.
- Expand job responsibilities of faculty to include coaching, advising, and counseling as well as teaching.

(4) Develop student cohort groups who progress through the early childhood education program together and who could thereby provide peer support built on familiarity and trust.

Note: For examples of higher education provision of student support, see the issue paper entitled *Supporting Services That Promote Student Success*, by Loretta Prater and Vicki Byrne.

Issue:

4 Absence of higher education faculty representative of the student cultures, language and socioeconomic population being served

Summary of the issue

Grounded in the ideals of truth-seeking, colleges and universities have an educational, moral, and social responsibility to help students to think for themselves and to recognize and resist the misinformation and

attending prejudices against other groups of people. Racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, misbeliefs about second-language learners, bias based on socio-economic class or disability, and negative beliefs about other groups of people one hardly knows obstruct all students' development and learning. When stereotypic thinking and prejudice are not interrupted, individuals' intellectual, emotional, and/or social development is thwarted, impacting their equal access to educational resources and keeps them from becoming contributors to our communities at local, state and national levels. When groups of people are discouraged from participating in higher education programs of study, then those enrolled in higher education lose the opportunity to: learn about; many cultural perspectives; to be exposed to multiple sets of experiences; and to become acquainted and respectfully interact with people different from themselves. In short, we all lose out when we are divided by prejudice, policies, and practices that systematically fail to include certain groups.

To foster a sense of opportunity and possibility, the makeup of early childhood education faculty should mirror the diverse community of learners being served. Research has demonstrated better learning outcomes when teachers are from the communities served and understand and value the cultures of the students they teach. Achieving meaningful gains toward parity between faculty and student body composition will require hard, slow work to overcome outright resistance and denial ("we are all the same"). For example, simply screening in more candidates of color for open positions does not go far enough; higher education institutions have to rethink and revamp recruitment practices as well as conduct intensive work with current faculty and administrators to make the personal, departmental, and institutional changes necessary to provide a welcoming, supportive, and equitable professional workplace that encourages diversity at all levels, including in faculty and administrative leadership positions. Inasmuch as diversity contributes to everyone's development and learning, every higher education institution should work toward faculty and staff diversity regardless of the demographics of its catchment area.

Challenges

- The lack of cultural diversity among faculty members means that many students enrolled in higher education programs see few role models from their own cultural community to provide assurance, motivation, and inspiration.
- There are few formal programs that mentor students of color who want to teach at the college level.
- The master's degree requirement for higher education instructors presents a barrier to many people of color who would like to teach at the college level.
- Lack of diversity among students in advanced degree programs perpetuates the problem of lack of faculty and staff diversity at higher education institutions; in effect, there is no "feeder system."
- These days there are few higher education faculty openings; moreover, the trend among colleges and universities is to replace tenured positions with part-time, adjunct and relatively low-paying teaching positions that offer few or no employee benefits.
- Faculty and administrators tend to hire from their own collegiate circles, which are unlikely to include potential candidates of color.
- Current faculty and administrators, who are primarily European American, may construe a move to diversify faculty and other institutional staff as "reverse discrimination" and a threat to their own job security.

- In many early childhood education departments/programs, the organizational culture is Eurocentric and middle class and not welcoming to new faculty or students of different cultural, language, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds.
- In many early childhood education departments/programs, course offerings and curricula are uncritically based on middle-class, Eurocentric values that may be at odds with the cultural beliefs of many students.

Possible steps

(1) Foster general understanding of why diversity is important.

- Offer on-campus forums on issues of equity and diversity, including the concept of cultural competence.
- Foster understanding of the purpose and scope of affirmative action.
- Provide ongoing professional development for faculty on equity and diversity issues such as racism, class bias, sexism, homophobia, language and culture, historical reference, and cross-cultural pedagogical approaches.

(2) Promote national standards on diversity for higher education institutions.

(3) Develop and implement institution-specific plans to achieve faculty and staff diversity:

- Apply the institution's mission and overarching goals as they speak to equity and diversity to actual practice, including faculty diversity. Advocate for amendment of the institution's mission and goal to include faculty and staff diversity.
- Secure information about effective approaches for recruitment, hiring, support, and retention of diverse faculty.
- Consider how institutional and department-specific policies, practices, and institutional/departmental culture and attitudes affect faculty diversity.
- Develop a plan to achieve and maintain faculty and staff diversity:
- Compare the demographics of the institution's catchment area, student body, and faculty and staff.
- Establish measurable objectives regarding faculty diversity and an action plan with a specific timetable to achieve them.
- Enact innovative community-based "grow your own" strategies to achieve faculty diversity such as mentoring and providing other supports to students of color who are interested in teaching at the college/university level.

(4) Secure fiscal support to help achieve diversity:

- Identify targeted and non-targeted sources of graduate student financial support such as scholarships and loan forgiveness for service.
- Secure mentoring/coaching grants.

Note: It is clear that we need both short-term and long-term strategies to rectify the current situation. The strategies seem to fall into two basic categories: namely (1) working with current faculty, and (2) identifying, preparing and supporting of new faculty. For specific examples of higher education institutions that are addressing the issue of faculty and staff diversity, see the issue paper entitled *Developing a Diverse Faculty Team: Eliminating the Barriers*, by Debra Sullivan and Cecelia Alvarado.

Issue:

5 Language as a barrier to student success

Summary of the issue

Today, students who are English language learners represent more than 40% of the stu-

dent population in some urban areas in the United States; yet, second-language learners have minimal access to college coursework and other professional development opportunities in their first language. Often students whose primary language is not English are required to attend ESL classes for years before they can gain entry into remediation to access an introductory English program. Not surprisingly, many become discouraged and drop out.

While people may become fluent in a second language in two or three years, their acquisition of the more complex language skills involved in reading and writing college-level academic content may take four or more years. Research indicates that the task of learning academic content in a language in which the student has not yet acquired proficiency is likely to result in incomplete understanding. Students who do not yet have full proficiency in English can learn more easily when they receive instruction in their first language; in turn, the process of gaining knowledge in their first language promotes development of proficiency in the second language.

Challenges

- There is pervasive misunderstanding among policy-makers and the public regarding second-language learning. Making training available in languages other than English is misinterpreted as coddling students who are in the process of learning English.
- Some authorities claim that immersion in English-language learning environments can benefit all second-language learners.
- The global perspective that bilingualism is a resource and monolingualism is a limitation is not widely embraced in the U.S.
- Students whose first language is not English may encounter two translation tasks: namely, (1) understanding and expressing themselves in English and (2) comprehending Eurocentric academic content and format that diverge from their own cultural framework.

Possible steps

(1) Promote awareness among students, faculty, and other institutional staff regarding the benefits of multilingual and multicultural diversity for all institutional stakeholders:

- Foster appreciation of the importance of multilingual and multicultural diversity and the research that supports the social and intellectual benefits of being bilingual and bicultural.
- Promote understanding of the difficulties of learning a second language, the difference between language fluency and proficiency, and the pedagogic rationale for providing instruction in a student's first language.
- Specify the ways in which multilingual and multicultural diversity benefit all institutional stakeholders.

(2) Ensure that institutions equitably serve all cultural and linguistic communities in their catchment area:

- Urge institutions to work in partnership with diverse community-based organizations to plan and implement accessible, appropriate educational programs in underserved cultural communities, including the provision of coursework in languages other than English.
- Ensure that higher education institutions develop the cultural understanding, historical reference, and linguistic capacity in their admission's and registrar's offices and among faculty to (1) competently review the transcripts and other documentation of educational attainment of applicants and enrolled students from other countries and (2) make accommodations for applicants

who cannot secure transcripts of prior education in their home country.
- Ensure that department/program advisory committees are inclusive, including student representation and reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student body and the catchment area.
- Acknowledge, respect, and celebrate values, languages, and other assets of the cultural communities represented in the student body.
- Identify, develop outreach strategies, and make institutional and programmatic changes to increase student enrollment from underrepresented cultural and linguistic communities.
- Offer support services to second-language learners in their first language.

(3) Secure institutional commitment to allocate the resources necessary to develop and offer courses in languages other than English.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for financial assistance, library resources, and student supports to assure student enrollment and success in courses offered in languages other than English.
- Forge linkages between early childhood education, ESL, and GED courses.
- Develop plans with sufficient resources to recruit, train, support, and engage instructors from the linguistic communities targeted for course delivery in their first language.
- Promote mentoring relationships between tenured faculty and new faculty who are members of underserved cultural and linguistic communities.

(4) Ensure that courses offered in languages other than English enjoy the same status as courses delivered in English:
- Establish that courses offered in languages other than English have the same credit value as courses in English.
- Confirm that courses presented in languages other than English are identified in the same format as English-language courses in official catalogs.

(5) Establish a state-level or a national resource clearinghouse where course texts and other curricular resources would be available in languages other than English. Such entities should be charged with evaluating materials for curricular appropriateness and cultural competence, translating them as needed, and making them available online and in hard copy.

Note: For specific examples of programs that support second-language learners, see the issue paper entitled *Language as a Barrier to Student Success*, by Sally D. Curtis and Stephen Santos Rico.

"As I think about a system and what it would look like, I imagine one that would allow people to make choices along the way, that there would be clear pathways for growth and advancement no matter who you were or what community that you lived in, that those support pieces would be there, that you wouldn't have to repeat courses. I hear often of people who come to this country with advanced degrees, and they start all over again. We just can't allow that to happen."

Valerie Krajec, Illinois Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Conclusion

In early childhood education, approaches to articulation must be patterned on a new paradigm that incorporates the continuum of educational development–in other words, that affirms the full range of educational experiences that enhance professional competency, from pre-service preparation to advanced degree programs. We have to not only assess and link the disconnected professional preparation programs being offered, but also rethink how and in what contexts people learn. A broad re-construction of articulation acknowledges that we are lifelong learners and that we acquire much of our professional proficiency in out-of-academic settings. Institutions must work together to develop policies and procedures to codify an individual's seemingly fragmented, but deeply meaningful, learning experiences into a coherent educational progression. After all, the disjunction is not in the practitioner's professional growth through learning in different contexts, but rather in the institutional failure to recognize the value and integrity of different teaching and learning environments that serve to increase that individual's professional competency.

Re-visioning articulation from the point of view of serving the student, calls for the creation of multiple educational pathways that help people to move from non-collegiate training such as a high school vocational program to post-secondary education, from on-the-job learning to formal learning in a higher education institution, from an associate to a baccalaureate degree program, and so on. In our nation, the United States, we are faced with the fact that every college and university is more or less autonomous and has its own set of rules. It is not, however, enough to build bridges between specific institutions. Articulation calls for uniform guiding principles at the state and national levels.

This being the case, we have to assess the appropriate level(s)–institution-specific, inter-institutional, state, or national–on which different articulation issues should be addressed.

In addition to the topic-specific preliminary recommendations, the following initial overarching recommendations emerged from the conference deliberations:

- **Develop a set of guiding principles** upon which all institutions of higher education can build to improve the articulation process and student success.
- **Identify national, state, local, and/or community organizations** to carry and provide leadership for each recommendation.
- **Create a technical assistance center** that houses research-based approaches to articulation and other information needed to work effectively on improving articulation.

It is hoped that the Cantigny Conference will serve as a catalyst for future discussions and action. While articulation issues have simmered on the back-burners of institutional, professional, and public policy concern, the stakes are too high for children, their families, communities, and early childhood educators to brook further delay. The social challenges to which early childhood programs must respond today require a consistent, well-educated, culturally competent workforce. By continuing to allow adults who aspire to become effective early childhood educators to be stifled by a fragmented educational system, we fail both the would-be educator and the children who deserve the opportunity to reach their potential.

Appendices

Appendix A: Cantigny Conference Participants

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Appendix C:
Resources Available at the Conference

Background and discussion papers:

Re-Visioning Articulation: Linkages in the Continuum of Students' Success, Carol Sharpe, Consultant, Wheelock College Insitute for Leadership and Career Initiatives

Developing a Diverse Faculty Team: Eliminating the Barriers, By Debra Sullivan, Praxis Institute for Early Childhood Education and Cecelia Alvarado, Wheelock College

Using Portfolio-Based Assessment to Accelerate Credentialing, By Cecilia L. McDaniel, Winston-Salem State University and Elizabeth Jones, Pacific Oaks College

Language as a Barrier to Student Success, By Sally D. Curtis, Educational Consultant, and Stephen Santos Rico, City College of San Francisco

Students, Degrees, Diversity: A Case for Articulation, By Bruce R. Stam, Chemeketa Community College and edited by Maurice Sykes, University of the District of Columbia

Support Services That Promote Student Success, By Loretta P. Prater, Southeast Missouri State University and Vicki Byrne, New Horizons Consulting Inc.

The Higher Education Governance, Institutional Standards and Articulation, By Dale Beckmann, Higher Education Consulting Service of Colorado, and H. Clay Whitlow, Evergreen Community College

Note: The papers listed on the previous page are available for purchase through Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives.
http://institute.wheelock.edu

Other resources made available by conference participants:

CAEL FORUM and News, Published by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, Chicago, Illinois.
http://cael.org

About AAHE, American Association for Higher Education
www.aahe.org

The Community College Role in Teacher Education, A Case for Collaboration, An issue paper of the American Association of College for Teacher Education, Washington, D.C., June 2002.
http://www.aacte.org

North Carolina Early Childhood Education Articulation Manual, Deborah Cassidy, Linda Hestenes, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Peggy Teague, Guilford Technical Community College, and Jo Ann Springs, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
djcassid@uncg.edu

Planning for Professional Development in Child Care: A Guide to Best Practices and Resources, North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development
www.dhhs.state.nc/dcd/dcdpage.htm

Preparing the Workforce, *Early Childhood Teacher Preparation at 2- and 4-year Institutions of Higher Education*, Diane M. Early and Pamela J. Winton, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Diane_early@unc.edu

Latinos in Higher Education, *Many Enroll*, *Too Few Graduate*, Richard Fry, Pew Hispanic Center.
www.pewhispanic.org

A Responsive Campus Climate: Uncovering Espoused Ideology and Ideology in Use, Steve O. Michael, and Eunsook Hyun, Kent State University
ehyun@kent.edu

Diversity and Learning: A Research Agenda, 2000 AAHE Research Forum, American Association for Higher Education
www.aahe.org/2000researchforum.htm

Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning, A Joint Report, American Association for Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, National Association of Student Personnel Adminstrators, June, 1998
www.aahe.org/assessment/joint.htm

Preparing Early Childhood Professionals at Advanced Levels: NAEYC's Revised Standards, National Association for the Education of Young Children
www.naeyc.org

Key Trends and Issues, Alliance for Equity in Higher Education
www.ihep.com/alliance/trends.html

Bridging Cultures in Our Schools: New Approaches That Work, West Ed, San Francisco
WestEd.org

Council Publications, Council for Professional Recognition, Washington, D.C.
www.cdacouncil.org

Early Childhood Advocates Seek a Stronger Alliance With Higher Ed., By Sean Cavanagh, Education Week, 2002

Career Pathway Registry Application Packet, West Virginia S.T.A.R.S. State Training and Registry System
wvpathway@aol.com

Early Childhood Education Certificate in Spanish, Springfield Technical Community College and Spanish American Union, Inc.
ifccpa@hotmail.com

Executive Summary, *The Connecticut Early Childhood Education Articulation Plan*, Connecticut Early Childhood Education Articulation Committee
daragozzine@netscape.net

A Position Statement on Articulation: Background, *Barriers*, *and Objectives*, New Jersey Professional Development Center for Early Care and Education, 2000
www.njpdc.org

Faculty Institute Overview, *Early Childhood Higher Education Faculty Initiative*, 2002-2003 Faculty Institutes
www.wheelock.edu/headstart

The Community College Role in Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers, *Policy Issue*
www.communitycollegepolicy.org/html/Issues/TeacherPrep/overview_TP.htm

Order Form, Center for Family and Community Partnerships, University of New Mexico, College of Education, Albuquerque, New Mexico
(505) 277-9648

Early Childhood Education Articulation in Florida: Results of a Survey of Community College Early Childhood Programs, *Final Report*, Prepared by Julie Rogers, Florida's Collaboration for Young Children and Their Families, Tallahassee, Florida, 2001
rogersjb@earthlink.net

Community Teachers Institute,
Washington, D.C.
www.communityteachers.org

The African American Early Childhood Resource Center; National Black Child Development Institute, Washington, D.C.
moreinfo@nbcdi.org

A Study of Immigrant Latinas at a California Community College through the Child Development Career Path, Santa Rosa Junior College
www.srjc.edu

Assessment of Prior Learning Fact Book, *2001-2002*, Barry University, Miami, Florida, School of Adult and Continuing Education

Notes