Advancing Community College Efforts in Paraprofessional Training (ACCEPT) Project
Faculty Outcomes of Professional Development to Build Evidence-Based Practices

Through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP: 84.325N), faculty members from an urban research university collaborated with early childhood education faculty members at a large urban community college to effect associate degree program change by infusing early childhood coursework, service learning, and practicum experiences with resources providing evidence-based practices that prepare paraprofessionals to serve young children with disabilities. The goal of the Advancing Community College Efforts in Paraprofessional Training (ACCEPT) project is to raise community college faculty perceived preparedness to teach content and activities that support the needs of children with diverse abilities and therefore to increase scholar confidence to promote the development and learning of children in inclusive early childhood settings. The vehicle in which faculty perceived preparedness and scholar confidence are heightened is through face-to-face group and individual professional development designed to help community college faculty review their course objectives, learning materials, and assigned content and activities to determine best contextual fit for infusion. To guide professional development and resource selection, twenty-four standards of practice for paraprofessionals (Appendix A) have been developed from those created by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the Division for Early Childhood (DEC), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC**).**

To measure outcomes of the project, university faculty designed surveys and interviews so that they would provide data to answer the following questions:

1. *Prior to collaborating with university faculty on the ACCEPT Project, what was the perceived preparedness of community college faculty members to teach content and activities and to what extent did they infuse early childhood courses with resources related to each of the ACCEPT standards of practice?* Researchers used a Pre-Infusion Faculty Survey to collect, analyze, and summarize data related to these questions.

2. *A Professional Needs Survey was administered to all community college early childhood faculty members to gather data to answer the question: For which ACCEPT standards of practice would you appreciate provision of more information on content, skills, and resources to support the development and learning of children with diverse abilities?*

3. *After collaboration with university faculty on the ACCEPT Project, to what extent did the level of perceived preparedness to teach and infusion of resources related to the ACCEPT Standard Topics change?* Researchers used face-to-face post-infusion interview data and analysis of course calendars to measure level of change.

For more specific information on which resources instructors thought were most effective in teaching their scholars evidence-based practices to prepare them for inclusive programs, researchers provided weekly Faculty Resource Surveys and asked for instructor feedback during professional development workshops and post-infusion interviews.

Measuring Pre-Infusion Perceived Preparedness to Teach, Level of Resource Use, and
Professional Development Needs

Faculty Pre-Infusion ACCEPT Survey

In the Fall of 2012, prior to infusion of community college early childhood program coursework, university faculty used an online survey (Appendix B) to measure the extent to which instructors believed they were prepared to teach content and activities related to the twenty-four standards of practice. Responses to the survey shown in Table 1 indicate the following:

1. Thirty-three percent (n = 2) of participants (N = 6) answered "Disagree" to the item *Educate CPCC students to use federal, state, and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices*.

2. Fifty percent answered "Strongly Disagree" (16.7%, n = 1) or "Disagree" (33.3%, n = 2) to the item *Educate CPCC students to demonstrate knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA*

3. Thirty-three percent answered "Strongly Disagree" (16.7 %, n = 1) or "Disagree" (16.7%, n = 1) to the item *Educate CPCC students to collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify, and use classroom instruction, curricula, materials, activities, and the physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs*.

4. Sixty-seven percent answered "Strongly Disagree" (16.7 %, n = 1) or "Disagree" (50.0%, n = 3) to the item *Educate CPCC students to support children birth to 5 in their use of augmentative and alternative communication as well as other assistive technology determined by the lead teacher and early intervention team.*

In sum, survey data indicated that community college instructors believed they were less prepared to teach content and activities related to the twenty-four standards of practice in four of eight topic areas: those focusing on knowledge of laws and policies, individualization, use of data to create a safe learning environment, and social-emotional interventions.

This same pre-infusion online survey measured the extent to which the community college early childhood education faculty infused courses with resources before collaborating with university faculty on the ACCEPT Project. Responses to the survey indicated the following:

1. Sixty percent (n =3) of participants answered "Disagree" to the item *Educate CPCC students to share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families, and other stakeholders*. [Item 1.1 under ACCEPT Standard Topic Area 1: Know and share the laws, policies, procedures and ethical principles that support and protect children birth to 5 with disabilities.]

2. Eighty percent answered "Strongly Disagree" (40 %, n = 2) or "Disagree" (40%, n = 2) to the item *Educate CPCC students to demonstrate knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA*.

[Item 2.2 under ACCEPT Standard Topic Area 2: Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.]

3. Sixty percent (*n* = 3) answered "Disagree" to the item *Educate CPCC students to increase the participation and engagement of all children (with and without disabilities) in the classroom.* [Item 4.2 under ACCEPT Standard 4: *Engage in instructional planning using data to develop and implement activities and lessons that engage all learners, provide increased feedback and reinforce skills and concepts*.]

4. Sixty percent answered "Strongly Disagree" (40%, *n* = 2) or "Disagree" (20%, *n* = 1) to the item *Educate CPCC students to collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify, and use classroom instruction, curricula, materials, activities, and the physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs.* [Item 5.1 under ACCEPT Standard Topic Area 5: Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.]

5. Eighty percent answered "Strongly Disagree" (40 %, *n* = 2) or "Disagree" (40%, *n*=2) to the item *Educate CPCC students to support children birth to 5 in their use of augmentative and alternative communication as well as other assistive technology determined by the lead teacher and early intervention team*. [Item 6.3 under ACCEPT Standard Topic Area 6: Build student skills to promote successful social interactions.]

6. Sixty percent (*n* = 3) answered "Disagree" to the item *Educate CPCC students to demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals, and early intervention team members*. [Item 7.2 under ACCEPT Standard Topic Area 7: Build child, family and community relationships that promote child development and learning.]

In sum, survey data indicated that community college faculty members infused few resources in six of eight topic areas: those focusing on knowledge of laws and policies, individualization, use

of data to guide instructional planning, use of data to create a safe learning environment, social-emotional interventions, and building child, family, and community relationships.

Professional Development Needs Survey

An Early Childhood Professional Development Needs Assessment was administered to all full-time community college faculty members on February 16, 2012 [Appendix C]. Although items on the needs survey did not match those on the perceived preparedness/ infusion survey implemented previously, they could easily be matched to topics and items within the ACCEPT Standards of Practice. The three areas of need targeted by community college faculty are listed below

1. Selecting and using resources to help scholars employ strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies to accomplish instructional objectives when teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs. This is closely aligned with ACCEPT Standard Topic 2: *Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners*, and Topic 3: *Build skills to promote child development and learning and lead to life and school success.*

2. Selecting and using resources to help scholars adapt instructional strategies and materials to meet the needs of exceptional learners. This is closely aligned with ACCEPT Standard Topic 4: *Engage in instructional planning using data to develop and implement activities and lessons that engage all learners, provide increased feedback, and reinforce skills and concepts,* and Topic 5: *Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.]*

3. Selecting and using resources to teach scholars how to employing strategies that promote the learner's independence. Like the first area of need targeted, this area is closely aligned with ACCEPT Standard Topic 2: *Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.*]

In sum, survey data indicated after four months of infusion, instructors believed that they would profit from professional development in five of eight topic areas: those focusing on individualization, evidence-based practice skill-building, use of data to guide instructional planning, and use of data to create a safe learning environment.

When pre-infusion perceived preparedness, pre-infusion extent of resource use, and professional development needs expressed by community college early childhood faculty were analyzed, the following conclusions were reached:

1. While faculty targeted four standard practice areas in which they did not perceive they were prepared to teach special education content and activities, they indicated that infusion was not occurring in six areas. Data indicated that they might know more than they were teaching. Further discussion with faculty members revealed that half of them had a masters or doctorate degree in special education or had a child with a disability. These instructors shared that it wasn't lack of knowledge that was hindering their infusion, it was lack of time. While they were knowledgeable about many aspects of the ACCEPT Standards of Practice, they needed help figuring out how to infuse the content and activities into their already packed curriculum. For university faculty, this meant that professional development needed to include not only the provision of resources but also a review of objectives and activities within and across the early childhood program to help instructors teach existing content in a different manner.

2. Instructors responses indicated that they did not perceive themselves prepared to teach, were not currently infusing resources, and requested professional development in practice areas 2: *Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners,* and 5: *Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners*. Two specific items were the targets in that area: 2.1.*Implement strategies that promote the self-awareness, self-regulation, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem and independence in children birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher*; and

2.2.*Demonstrate knowledge of the etiology characteristics, and educational implications of categories of disability under IDEA*. For Standard 5, the target was 5.1. *Collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify, and use classroom instruction, curriculum, materials, activities and physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs*. Instructors expressed that traditionally information addressing these items was taught exclusively in the Children with Exceptionalities course. Instructors also indicated that use of assistive technology was taught exclusively in the Educational Technology course even though concepts on the use of assistive technology by children with disabilities related to content and activities across all early childhood courses. For university faculty, this meant that professional development efforts needed to address a review of the Children with Exceptionalities and Educational Technology coursework to determine concepts that could be taught in other courses to enrich content.

Measuring Post-Infusion Perceived Preparedness to Teach and Level of Resource Use

Course Calendars

In June, 2013, twenty-one early childhood course calendars were reviewed for the purpose of determining the level of infusion change after ACCEPT Project collaboration. An example of one of the course calendars may be viewed in Appendix E of this paper. Prior to collaborating with university faculty and receiving professional development, community college faculty infused on average one resource per course to support the development and learning of children with diverse abilities. Resources usually addressed two ACCEPT Standard Practice items. The first was 3.3: *Embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places* and the second was 6.1: *Promote the peer interaction skills and development of friendship in all children*. The level of infusion changed dramatically after collaboration. Not only were community college faculty members using the online searchable database and individualized matrices to find resources on the ACCEPT Project website, professional development gave them opportunities to collaborate with researchers in effecting

program changes, learning to use comprehensive websites and modules throughout coursework, and building and revising course calendars together so that gaps and overlap in content could be identified and amended. Each course calendar indicated that at least sixteen resources addressing ACCEPT Standards of Practice were infused per course per semester. All ACCEPT Standards of Practice were represented across the program with areas receiving more attention dependent on the course content. Reviews of calendars indicated that *Introduction to Early Childhood Education* infusion resources provided a brief introduction of concepts in all standards of practice topics and students learned how to use comprehensive websites like the CONNECT Modules and the PACER Center to find information on individualizing instruction, increasing participation and engagement of all learners, and modifying and adapting the environment and instruction. Once exposed to concepts in the Introduction course, community college scholars were able to study them in more depth as they progressed through their program. Instructors now used resources covering skills and content related to the specific items under each standards of practice area, supporting scholars as they applied concepts to life in the classroom.

Interviews

After the 2013 community college Spring Semester, ACCEPT Project researchers met with community faculty members for one-one-one, face-to-face interviews. Questions asked by researchers were related to perceived preparedness to teach, selection and use of recommended resources, and the impact of professional development on them and their scholars. Researchers were most interested in the levels of change for perceived preparedness to teach and infuse in ACCEPT Standards of Practice areas 2: *Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners,* and 5: *Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners*. Also of interest was the level of change for perceived preparedness to teach and use of resources for items 2.1. *Implement strategies that promote the self-awareness, self-regulation, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem and independence in children*

birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher; 2.2.*Demonstrate knowledge of the etiology characteristics, and educational implications of categories of disability under IDEA*; and 5.1. *Collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify, and use classroom instruction, curriculum, materials, activities and physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs*. Additional focus included increased confidence to teach practices related to 1.2. *Use federal, state and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices*; and 6.3 *Support children birth to 5 in their use of augmentative and alternative communication skills and other assistive technology as determined by the lead teacher and early intervention team*; and increased use of resources related to 1.1. *Share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families and other stakeholders*; 4.2. *Increase the participation and engagement of all (with and without disabilities) children in the classroom*; 6.3. cited above; and 7.2. *Demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals and early intervention team members.*

Prior to the interviews, questions were developed, reviewed, and endorsed by the full ACCEPT research team. [Appendix D] All interviews were recorded and then transcribed; field notes were taken in case of audio-recorder malfunction (which did not occur). ACCEPT researchers separately reviewed the transcripts from community interviewees and highlighted each comment expressing a positive change related to one or more of the ACCEPT Standards of Practice areas. Each statement of satisfaction was highlighted, then coded with an S and the number of the area with which it was most closely aligned. Transcripts were then reviewed for statements reflecting increased perceived preparedness to teach or increased use of resources for specific competency items data indicated were a concern at the beginning of the project. Researchers then met to discuss each transcript and reach consensus on coding, also noting themes emerging from the interviews.

Interview results indicated that each instructor ($n = 10$) made at least four statements expressing a positive change and all instructors expressed a total of 79 statements of positive

change related to the 8 ACCEPT Standards of Practice areas. Looking more closely at each area, researchers that the number of statements of positive change for each area was as follows: Standard 1 (n =9), Standard 2 (n=17), Standard 3 (n=19), Standard 4 (n=11), Standard 5 (n=6), Standard 6 (n=5), Standard 7 (n=7), and Standard 8 (n=5). Interview responses indicating positive change in perceived preparedness and use of resources related to competency items noted as a concern at the start of the project are reported below.

1.1: *Share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families and other stakeholders*.

Professional development efforts included helping instructors investigate resources with information that related the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) with specific course content across the program and presented the differences among P.L. 101-476, P.L. 102-119, P.L. 105-17, and P.L. 108-446. As researchers and community college instructors worked together, they discovered that important information on the transition of children from early intervention to preschool services at age three was not covered in any course, including *Children with Exceptionalities*. At that point, efforts included determining where that content best fit and resources that would be used to help scholars understand everyone's role in facilitating transitions.

Interviews indicated that although they believed that this was one of the more difficult competency items to infuse, instructors were finding numerous resources to help them and were becoming more competent and confident in assimilating them throughout their coursework. In describing her infusion efforts for this item, one instructor stated that, "*I feel like it's easier to do than I realized at first. Once you start thinking of it not as an add-on but a complete integration, infusion, it becomes easier.*"

Several instructors shared that they experienced difficulty finding resources on their own but those found on the website database and matrices led to additional ones with information they were seeking. For instance, an instructor of School-Age Program

Administration mentioned that *a video from the White House website on my course matrix in which the president's record for supporting individuals with disabilities was reviewed led me to independently finding information on the impact some of the acts he has signed and the impact of budget cuts on the rights of individuals with disabilities.* Another instructor shared that she found information about the legal aspects of running a child care center as she was researching aspects of IDEA. Instructors for the Health, Safety, and Nutrition course shared that an activity to evaluate school playgrounds was broadened to include not only safety concerns but accessibility and inclusion issues as well. Scholars were given information and assignments to help the address questions like, "Are all children able to use all pieces of equipment and engage in all activities and if not, what do we need to change to make that happen?" Interview responses indicated that because this competency item was so content-heavy, instructors appreciated websites like National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) that provided easy-to-find, practical information and clear, visually appealing videos such as the CONNECT Modules: *Foundations of Inclusion Birth to Five, Celebrating 35 Years of IDEA* produced by the U.S. Department of Education, and Open Society Foundations' *Early Childhood Intervention and The Power of the Family*.

1.2: *Use federal, state and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices.*

Due to time constraints, the infusion of content and skills related to early intervention across the program was not a focus of group workshops. Instead, university researchers collaborated with an adjunct instructor who worked full-time as an Infant, Toddler, and Family Specialist for the state Division of Early Intervention and Education to determine how she could help her colleagues with infusion in this topic. Her interview responses illustrated researchers' success in building teamwork among instructors who had previously independently planned and implemented their coursework and used their expertise and knowledge of resources exclusively in the course sections they taught. Although interview data did not reflect increased perceived preparedness to teach concepts and skills related to early intervention across the

program yet, they did reflect this instructor's plans to collaborate with the faculty to continue the infusion work of ACCEPT for best practices in early intervention support for children and families and use of assessments. They also revealed the achievements of another instructor who incorporated information on early intervention team practices within early childhood administration coursework.

The Infant, Toddler and Family Specialist's plans for future infusion shared in the interview included introducing the community college faculty to *Results Matter Video Library* resources on authentic assessment practices and use of videos to inform and support families of atypically developing infants and toddlers. The instructor stated that these videos not only fit well in course content for *Infant, Toddlers, and Twos*, but also for *Child Development* and *Child, Family, and Community*. She believed that the *Wrightslaw* and *Family Center on Technology and Disability* websites, and *Assistive Technology in Action* videos from the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs would also provide information scholars could share with colleagues and families on technology support. In addition, content previously taught in *Child Guidance*, *Social-Emotional Development*, *Health, Safety, and Nutrition*, and *Healthy Lifestyles-Youth* fit well with new information on the effects of childhood stress on health across the lifespan from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She planned to aide instructors as they related this new information to several categories of disability under IDEA, among them Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Developmental Delay, Multiple Disabilities, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Interview responses indicated a full-time instructor and administrator in the program had found resources that helped both instructors and scholars gain knowledge in evidence-based practices for effective, efficient, and thorough planning meetings among parents, early childhood program teachers, administrators, staff, intervention specialists and therapists. She introduced the state department's infant-toddler program website to provide scholars with content on early intervention services and descriptions of a variety of specialists/therapists

including the role of each one on the intervention team. She invited local therapists to classrooms to share their personal experiences as members of early intervention teams serving young children receiving a variety of physical, emotional, and intellectual supports. DEC guidelines such as developing a program philosophy on inclusion, establishing a system of supports, and creating a plan for continued professional development were now incorporated into course activities. She shared that scholars appreciated school district websites like the one produced by Camden City that provided models of mission statements, program descriptions and the role of specialists in the development and learning of all young children. Resources she also mentioned that positively impacted her ability to teach concepts related to early intervention team practices were a research brief on team communication found on the ACCEPT website, state information found on the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) website, and program information found on *The Promising Practices Network* website.

2.2 *Demonstrate knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of categories of disability under IDEA.*

Emerging from the interviews was the fact that content and activities related to this competency item were exclusively taught in the *Children with Exceptionalities* course prior to the ACCEPT project, and that instructors had found it quite easy to change that and incorporate resources into coursework across the program after working with university researchers. One outcome of professional development cited in interviews was that instead of teaching their scholars the different categories or characteristics of disabilities under IDEA in isolation from other content and skills, instructors helped scholars learn this information in context with evidence-based practices. Content and practice activities were presented together so that the focus was not on deficits of individuals but on their strengths and the interventions and effective teaching skills that promoted their development and learning. Resources provided by ACCEPT and mentioned in interviews as useful for modeling evidence-based practices included videos from the Early Development Lab at Vanderbilt and CONNECT and IRIS Center Modules. A few instructors discussed their fear that the increase of online coursework would challenge

their ability to have scholars practice these modeled practices. Although they appreciated the videos, they believed that scholars needed labs and face-to-face course time after viewing them to practice and demonstrate mastery of skills before classroom service learning or practicum experiences.

Another outcome of ACCEPT project professional development was that instructors gained confidence in their ability to teach scholars interventions for a broad range of diverse abilities. Several faculty members shared that in the past the *Children with Exceptionalities* course focused on Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder because of its prevalence in the news and current literature. As a result, scholars' activities and projects focused on that category of disability as well. With the infusion of ACCEPT-recommended resources, scholars' work showed that they were now focused on evidence-based interventions promoting the development and learning of children with a variety of categories of disability under IDEA and that they were researching more specific syndromes (i.e., Duane, Fragile X, and Prader Willi, and Williams-Beuren), disorders (i.e., Epilepsy, Kniest Dysplasia, Reactive Attachment, Spina Bifida), and conditions (i.e., Cleft Palate, Sensorineural Hearing Loss). Assignments for the course Health, Safety, and Nutrition indicated that scholars were learning interventions for children with chronic or acute health problems leading to a diagnosis of Other Health Impairment and successful practices to support children with eating issues due to a Sensory Processing Disorder. In the Creative Activities course, scholars wrote about what they would do if a child with sensory issues did not want to participate in making a collage because of the aversion to the feel of glue, or had a problem with finger painting or making play dough. Scholar references on assignments revealed increased use of websites such as the *American Foundation for the Blind*, *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health, *National Foundation of the Deaf and Human Development*, and *The ARC of the United States*.

Instructors also confirmed their increased knowledge of the use of assistive technology to support children with diverse abilities. Faculty members teaching courses with one hour

credit labs (i.e., Creative Activities, Exploration Activities, Language and Literacy Experiences) described how they set up stations and centers that provided examples of assistive technology. Resources provided by ACCEPT such as Cara's Kit and device demonstrations and loans provided by the state Assistive Technology program taught scholars how items and equipment were used. Additional resources cited in interviews were information and videos from the CONNECT Modules, Head Start Center for Inclusion, CAST, the PACER Center, the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), and disability-specific centers and organizations.

Increased knowledge of the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) was also evident in interviews. Instructors mentioned that concepts and skills related to UDL helped scholars understand that curricula, classrooms, and environments can be designed to be usable by all, including those identified with a category of disability under IDEA. Resources supporting this instruction cited in interviews included *The Sandbox Series* at PBS, *The National Center on Universal Design for Learning*, and *the Early Childhood Center* at Indiana University in Bloomington.

4.2 Increase the participation and engagement of all (with and without) disabilities children in the classroom.

Professional development provided to community college faculty intentionally focused on resources that combined content and skills related to competency items 2.2 and 4.2. Therefore, knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of categories of disability under IDEA were taught to scholars as they practiced and mastered evidence-based skills that increased the participation and engagement of all children. Interview data indicated that as a result of this, instructors were very aware of resources with information on interventions and best practices found to successfully promote the development and learning of children with a wide variety of abilities.

Professional development also focused on helping instructors teach best practices for assessment in early childhood settings. This was a challenge as content and skills related to collecting, analyzing, and summarizing data to make decisions regarding curricula, activities, lessons, and the physical environment were not previously addressed in the community college early childhood program. At collaborative workshops, university researchers focused on providing instructors with the key ideas from professional guidelines on early childhood assessment (i.e., Division for Early Childhood (DEC), 2007; National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE, 2003; National Education Goals Panel, 1998; and National Research Council, 2008); reviewing with them website videos and resources that provided models of best practices in conducting assessments for promoting the learning of all children (i.e., the *IRIS Center*, Office of Head Start: *The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning*, *Results Matter-Colorado);* and emailing them TEACHING Exceptional Children and Young Exceptional Children "briefed" articles on this topic.

Six months after beginning the ACCEPT project collaboration, community college instructors began to independently infuse resources where they saw gaps in their curricula. Interview responses disclosed that they identified a gap in scholar ability to evaluate the quality of early childhood classrooms in terms of the participation and engagement of learners. They requested resources from university researchers who directed them to the *Inclusive Classroom Profile*, an observation rating scale designed to assess classroom practices that support the developmental of children with disabilities in early childhood settings. Although this tool is not yet available other than for research purposes, a module describing its twelve dimensions of quality is available on the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute website. Instructors stated that these dimension provided insight on what to look for when scholars visited early childhood classrooms and that they level of student questions had increased regarding accessibility, participation, and support related to children with diverse abilities.

5.1 *Collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify and use classroom instruction, curricula, materials, activities and the physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs*.

This competency item received much attention during the project and it was evident that change had occurred in the program in both the level of perceived preparedness and the number of resources infused in courses throughout the program. For instance, at the beginning of the project, concepts and issues related to the use of assistive technology were taught only in the Educational Technology course. At the end, child development courses included information on low tech, medium, and high tech materials and equipment to support and enhance social, motor, communication, and academic skills. Curriculum Planning and administration course instructors also mentioned in their interviews that they now included in their coursework information on using assessments to determine the need and best contextual fit for assistive technology and using local and state agencies to find information, training, and technical support. In their interviews, faculty members mentioned one professional development in which examples of all types of assistive technology were introduced in power point slides and videos, DEC competencies for assistive technology were reviewed, and instructors were given lists of recommended websites and resources. Instructors noted that once they began discovering what was out there, they were motivated to explore find resources independently.

Instructors mentioned that their infusion of resources led to lengthy conversations in their online discussion boards related to items 4.2 and 5.1 on the effectiveness of interventions and accommodations they were trying and the ease of implementation. One instructor shared a scholar's entry as follows: *When I was growing up there was a child in my class who could not walk so every game was a "sit-out" for him. Now I've researched simple ways to change activities to accommodate the needs of a student who cannot run or walk. I found that doesn't require a whole lot of time or expensive equipment; it just requires you to think differently*.

One issue that came to light in interviews was the difficulty some practicum students had collaborating with the lead teacher and intervention team. Before working with ACCEPT, faculty had not included in their courses details of how to request information about a student receiving services or who appeared in need of additional support. Once scholars practiced ethical and professional ways of requesting that information, they found that results could vary. In some cases, they did not receive permission to acquire any information, in others, they were able to conference with the teacher, members of the intervention team, and/or the inclusion specialist. Students shared that their ability to individualize and provide support for all students increased as they acquired more information about the needs of and successful interventions for children in their classrooms. Interview responses indicated that intervention specialists, therapist, and support team members rarely provided services within the classroom.

6.3: *Support children birth to 5 in their use of augmentative and alternative communication skills and other assistive technology as determined by the lead teacher and early intervention team.*

Although this competency item also addresses the use of assistive technology, it is different in that it relates to communication skills and interacting successfully with others. Interview comments indicated that the Child Guidance, Social-Emotional Development, Healthy Lifestyles-Youth, and School-Age Development and Programs courses had been successfully infused with information not only regarding setting up the environment to promote positive interactions but also being familiar with the development and implementation of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools for children in the earliest stages of communication and language development. Mentioned in interviews was increased knowledge and use of resources related to low tech assistive technology such as communication boards with pictures and words and high tech Speech Generating Devices (SGDs). Resources cited included the website *Supporting Early Education Development Systems* (SEEDS) Project, and the webinar *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* produced by Kathryn Drager, Janice Light, and David McNaughton.

7.2 *Demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals and early intervention team members.*

Interview responses indicated that CPCC faculty had successfully increased the use of resources related to this competency item, introducing them not just in the course Child, Family, and Community, but throughout the early childhood program. Instructors found that parents of children with disabilities were powerful change-agents for their scholars particularly when talking about challenging behavior that might be a symptom for an underlying disability or disorder. Because of this, they invited parents to speak in their face-to-face and hybrid classes and included parent blogs in the online course assignments. This led to faculty discussions of "quality of resources" and whether or not these would be considered evidence-based resources. Interview comments indicated that they agreed to preview parent visits and blogs, emphasizing the information parents provided that helped scholars create and sustain relationships of trust and support.

Resources mentioned as particularly useful in providing information for CPCC scholars were CONNECT Module 3: Communication and Collaboration and CONNECT Module 4: Family-Professional Partnerships, and Zero to Three. Issues related to this item were sometimes similar to those discussed when covering concepts and activities for item 5.1. Interview comments indicated that scholars appreciated any resources that helped them approach family members, colleagues, service professionals, and early intervention team members and begin building a Foundation for frequent communication. They particularly appreciated CONNECT videos and activities that modeled conversations for them and then provided opportunities for them to practice with their peers.

Summary

Positive change was noted for all competency items targeted for needed resource infusion and professional development with items 1.1, 2.2, and 5.1 receiving the most comments related to both increased perceived preparedness and resource use. Perceived preparedness to teach

skills and concepts related to item 7.1 was high before the ACCEPT Project, but interview comments indicated that there was increased use of resources to infuse courses throughout the program. Interview comments regarding increased confidence to teach concepts related to item 1.2 and 6.3, and increased use of resources for item 4.2 were not as prevalent and that was understandable given that early intervention assistive technology, and observation and assessment were not consistently addressed throughout the program prior to the ACCEPT Project.

One theme that emerged from the interview comments regarding instructor change was sustainability of infusion efforts. Plans for continuing and extending the work of the ACCEPT Project were evident in interview responses regarding plans for the future. Several referred to recent Research Briefs added to the ACCEPT website and discussed their plans to create response questions for them and infuse them into course activities. Others mentioned their efforts to find resources on their own. One had found information on how budget cuts were affecting programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that were described in ACCEPT resources. Plans for the future also included creating a list of ACCEPT-recommended resources with closed captioning, providing more information to scholars on sharing sources for information about insurance and support services, ensuring that students with disabilities are addressed not only when scholars develop their lesson plans but also when they create their program philosophies and budgets. One instructor commented, *We have successfully infused the courses in our program but we can still do a better job. This is just the start. We can be even more purposeful, we can revisit our coursework every semester. This is permanent; it will stay.*

Instructors commented on their appreciation of matrices with resources individualized by course and the time they were given during professional development workshops to investigate resources and add them to their course calendars.

Two additional themes that emerged from the interview data were the ease of implementation and instructor's raised level of awareness. As one instructor shared, *It's made me realize that infusion of this topic is very natural and can easily be done. I never create a lesson plan now without thinking about students with diverse abilities. It's been very eye-opening. It made me realize that this was largely an ignored topic unless it was like, "Okay, were going to talk about children with disabilities for just this one paragraph." I don't think children with disabilities have been ignored completely but they have been treated more as a side note. What the ACCEPT Project taught me was that we can change that attitude administrators and teachers have that they are not equipped and that students with disabilities have to go somewhere else. It's taught me that the more information and support we provide at the **preservice** level, the greater the chance that they will adopt a 'can do' attitude; that instead of focusing on the things that can't be done, they will immediately start planning how they are going to make it happen.* Another instructor summed it up for us. *I'm infusing all my classes now. Now I can't not do it. It's going to be a natural part of all my courses, of everything I teach.*

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Table 1. *ACCEPT Project Fall 2012 Faculty Survey Summary*

Topic/Item	Preparedness						Extent of Infusion					
	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*
1. Know and share the laws, policies, procedures, and ethical principles that support and protect children birth to 5 with disabilities.												
Educate CPCC students to share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families, and other stakeholders.	00.0	00.0	66.7	33.3	*3.33*	*0.52*	00.0	60.0	40.0	00.0	*2.40*	*0.55*
Educate CPCC students to use federal, state, and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices.	00.0	33.3	66.7	00.0	*2.67*	*0.52*	20.0	00.0	80.0	00.0	*1.80*	*0.45*
Educate CPCC students to indicate knowledge of appropriate educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.	00.0	00.0	66.7	33.3	*3.33*	*0.52*	00.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	*2.80*	*0.84*
2. Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.												

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Topic/Item	Preparedness						Extent of Infusion					
	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*
Educate CPCC students to implement strategies that promote the self-awareness, self-regulation, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem, and independence in children birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher.	00.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	*3.33*	*0.82*	00.0	40.0	20.0	40.0	*3.00*	*1.00*
Educate CPCC students to demonstrate knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA.	16.7	33.3	50.0	00.0	*2.33*	*0.82*	40.0	40.0	20.0	00.0	*1.80*	*0.84*
Educate CPCC students to demonstrate knowledge of Early Childhood/Special Education best practices as defined by professional organizations.	00.0	00.0	66.7	33.3	*3.33*	*0.52*	00.0	20.0	50.0	20.0	*3.00*	*0.71*
3. Build skills to promote child development and learning and lead to life and school success.												
Educate CPCC students to build early cognitive skills including oral communication and literacy skills.	00.0	00.0	66.7	33.3	*3.33*	*0.52*	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	*2.80*	*1.30*
Educate CPCC students to participate in the selection and use of appropriate instructional materials, equipment, supplies, and other resources needed to effectively teach children birth to 5 with exceptional needs.	00.0	00.0	66.7	33.3	*3.33*	*0.52*	00.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	*3.00*	*0.71*

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Topic/Item	Preparedness						Extent of Infusion					
	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*
Educate CPCC students to embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places.	00.0	00.0	50.0	50.0	*3.50*	*0.55*	00.0	20.0	40.0	40.0	*3.20*	*0.84*
4. Engage in instructional planning using data to develop and implement activities and lessons that engage all learners, provide increased feedback, and reinforce skills and concepts.												
Use data to develop and implement activities and lessons.	00.0	00.0	50.0	50.0	*3.50*	*0.55*	00.0	20.0	40.0	40.0	*3.20*	*0.84*
Educate CPCC students to increase the participation and engagement of all children (with and without disabilities) in the classroom (e.g., use knowledge of individual children's strengths, interests, and learning styles to encourage engagement in varied activities).	00.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	*3.33*	*0.82*	00.0	60.0	20.0	20.0	*2.60*	*0.89*
Educate CPCC students to promote child development and learning through varied delivery of instruction (e.g., teach individual students or small groups of students to reinforce learning and skills introduced by the teacher).	00.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	*3.33*	*0.82*	00.0	33.3	50.0	16.7	*2.83*	*0.75*

Topic/Item	Preparedness						Extent of Infusion					
	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*
5. Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.												
Educate CPCC students to collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify, and use classroom instruction, curricula, materials, activities, and the physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs (e.g., use and maintain assistive technology for children birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher).	16.7	16.7	50.0	16.7	*2.67*	*1.03*	40.0	20.0	40.0	00.0	*2.00*	*1.00*
Educate CPCC students to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on the needs of the children, their strengths, interests, and developmental growth.	00.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	*3.33*	*0.82*	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	*2.80*	*1.30*
Educate CPCC students to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on effectiveness of activities and lessons.	00.0	16.7	50.0	33.3	*3.17*	*0.75*	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	*2.80*	*1.30*
6. Build student skills to promote successful social interactions.												

Topic/Item	Preparedness						Extent of Infusion					
	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*
Educate CPCC students to promote peer interaction skills and development of friendship in all children (e.g., teach children to effectively communicate their emotions and feelings).	00.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	*3.33*	*0.82*	00.0	40.0	20.0	40.0	*3.00*	*1.00*
Educate CPCC students to develop and implement basic classroom rules and routines that do not undermine the dignity of the individual or the basic human rights of children with disabilities.	00.0	00.0	50.0	50.0	*3.50*	*0.55*	00.0	20.0	40.0	40.0	*3.20*	*0.84*
Educate CPCC students to support children birth to 5 in their use of augmentative and alternative communication as well as other assistive technology determined by the lead teacher and early intervention team.	16.7	50.0	16.7	16.7	*2.33*	*1.03*	40.0	40.0	00.0	20.0	*2.00*	*1.22*
7. **Build child, family, and community relationships that promote child development and learning.**												
Educate CPCC students to provide support to families so that they can implement health, nutrition, and safety practices and procedures for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs.	16.7	00.0	33.3	50.0	*3.17*	*1.17*	20.0	20.0	40.0	20.0	*2.60*	*1.14*

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Topic/Item	Preparedness						Extent of Infusion					
	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*	SD	D	A	SA	*M*	*SD*
Educate CPCC students to demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals, and early intervention team members.	00.0	00.0	66.7	33.3	*3.33*	*0.52*	00.0	60.0	20.0	20.0	*2.60*	*0.89*
Educate CPCC students to provide accurate and timely information about children birth to 5 with exceptional needs to individuals who have the need and right to know under the guidance of the lead teacher.	16.7	00.0	33.3	50.0	*3.17*	*1.17*	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	*2.80*	*1.30*
8. Engage in professional and ethical practice at all times.												
Educate CPCC students to maintain the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, families, and agency employees.	00.0	00.0	33.3	66.7	*3.67*	*0.52*	00.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	*3.00*	*0.71*
Educate CPCC students to participate as a team member to enhance communication and problem-solving.	00.0	00.0	50.0	50.0	*3.50*	*0.55*	00.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	*2.80*	*0.84*
Assist families in accessing information and resources.	00.0	00.0	50.0	66.7	*3.50*	*0.55*	20.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	*2.80*	*1.30*

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Table 2. *Summary Ratings of Importance of Topics for Future Professional Development*

Number	Topic	Mean	SD
5.	Using strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies to accomplish instructional objectives when teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs.	2.88	0.35
6.	Assisting in adapting instructional strategies and materials to meet the needs of exceptional learners.	2.75	0.46
8.	Employing strategies that promote the learner's independence.	2.63	0.74
7.	Using strategies to facilitate effective integration into various settings.	2.50	0.76
13.	Using child and family assessments and evaluations.	2.50	0.76
3.	Knowing the rights and responsibilities of families and children as they relate to individual learning needs.	2.38	0.52
14.	Learning how to develop, interpret, and implement an Individualized Family Service Plan [IFSP] and an Individualized Education Plan [IEP].	2.38	0.74
9.	Making use of strategies in a variety of settings, to assist in the development of social skills.	2.13	0.83
10.	Understanding the teacher's role in promoting the language development of children with different language needs.	2.13	0.83
1.	Understanding the purposes of programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs.	2.00	0.93
2.	Gaining awareness of the effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.	1.88	0.83
4.	Demonstrating sensitivity to the diversity of individuals and families.	1.88	0.83
11.	Demonstrating the ability to promote family-centered, community-based, and culturally competent practices.	1.88	0.83
12.	Learning how to engage in teaming and collaborating when making decisions and problem solving.	1.88	0.83

ACCEPT Standards of Practice

Topics and Focus Items

1.0 Know and share the laws, policies, procedures and ethical principles that support and protect children birth to 5 with disabilities.

   1.1 Share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families and other stakeholders.

   1.2 Use federal, state and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices.

   1.3 Indicate knowledge of appropriate educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.

2.0 Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.

   2.1 Implement strategies that promote the self-awareness, self-regulation, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem and independence in children birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher.

   2.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of categories of disability under IDEA.

   2.3 Demonstrate knowledge of Early Childhood/Special Education best practices as defined by professional organizations.

3.0 Build skills to promote child development and learning and lead to life and school success.

   3.1 Support early cognitive skills including oral communication and early literacy skills.

   3.2 Participate in the selection and use of appropriate instructional materials, equipment, supplies, and other resources needed to effectively teach children with exceptional needs.

   3.3 Embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places.

4.0 Engage in instructional planning using data to develop and implement activities and lessons that engage all learners, provide increased feedback, and reinforce skills and concepts.

   4.1 Use data to develop and implement activities and lessons.

   4.2 Increase the participation and engagement of all (with and without disabilities) children in the classroom (e.g., use knowledge of individual children's strengths, interests, and learning styles to encourage engagement in varied activities).

4.3 Promote child development and learning through varied delivery of instruction (e.g., teach individual students or small groups of students to reinforce learning and skills introduced by the teacher.)

5.0 Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.

5.1 Collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify and use classroom instruction, curricula, materials, activities and the physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs. (e.g., Use and maintain assistive technology for children birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher.)

5.2 Collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on the needs of the children, their strengths, interests, and developmental growth.

5.3 Collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on effectiveness of activities and lessons.

6.0 Build student skills to promote successful social interactions.

6.1 Promote peer interaction skills and development of friendship in all children (e.g., teach children to effectively communicate their emotions and feelings).

6.2 Develop and implement basic classroom rules and routines that do not undermine the dignity of the individual or the basic human right of children with disabilities.

6.3 Support children birth to 5 in their use of augmentative and alternative communication skills and other assistive technology as determined by the lead teacher and early intervention team.

7.0 Build child, family and community relationships that promote child development and learning.

7.1 Provide support to families so that they can implement health, nutrition and safety practices and procedures for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs.

7.2 Demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals and early intervention team members.

7.3 Provide accurate and timely information about children birth to 5 with exceptional needs to individuals who have the need and right to know under the guidance of the lead teacher.

8.0 Engage in professional and ethical practice at all times.

8.1 Maintain the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, families, and agency employees.

8.2 Participate as a team member to enhance communication and problem-solving.

8.3 Assist families in accessing information and resources.

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APPENDIX B

ACCEPT Project Faculty Survey

The ACCEPT Project requests your feedback to help understand (1) your preparedness to infuse the Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) early childhood curriculum with special education content and (2) the extent to which you have infused content following the pilot phase of the project. Your responses will be useful in understanding how ACCEPT Project experiences may have contributed to course revisions. All information provided (i.e., individual responses) will be kept anonymous and reported in aggregate form.

Statement	Preparedness				Extent of Infusion			
The topics and items below describe elements relevant to special education that were considered for infusion into early childhood courses during the pilot phase of the ACCEPT Project. Please read the following statements and circle the ratings that best reflect your perceptions.	Please provide a rating for each item based on **YOUR PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS TO INFUSE** related content.				Please provide a rating for each item based on the **EXTENT TO WHICH YOU INFUSED** related content.			
	1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree				**1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree**			
Topic 1: Know and share the laws, policies, procedures and ethical principles that support and protect children birth to 5 with disabilities.								
Educate CPCC students to share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families and other stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to use federal, state, and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to indicate knowledge of appropriate educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Topic 2: Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.								
Educate CPCC students to implement strategies that promote the self-awareness, self-regulation, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem, and independence in children birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

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Statement	Preparedness				Extent of Infusion			
The topics and items below describe elements relevant to special education that were considered for infusion into early childhood courses during the pilot phase of the ACCEPT Project. Please read the following statements and circle the ratings that best reflect your perceptions.	Please provide a rating for each item based on **YOUR PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS TO INFUSE** related content.				Please provide a rating for each item based on the **EXTENT TO WHICH YOU INFUSED** related content.			
	1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree				1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree			
Educate CPCC students to demonstrate knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to demonstrate knowledge of Early Childhood/ Special Education best practices as defined by professional organizations.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Topic 3: Build skills to promote child development and learning and lead to life and school success.								
Educate CPCC students to build early cognitive skills including oral communication and early literacy skills.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to participate in the selection and use of appropriate instructional materials, equipment, supplies, and other resources needed to effectively teach children birth to 5 with exceptional needs.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Topic 4: Engage in instructional planning using data to develop and implement activities and lessons that engage all learners, provide increased feedback, and reinforce skills and concepts.								
Use data to develop and implement activities and lessons.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to increase the participation and engagement of all children (with and without disabilities) in the classroom. (e.g., Use knowledge of individual children's strengths, interests, and learning styles to encourage engagement in varied activities.)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

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Statement	Preparedness				Extent of Infusion			
The topics and items below describe elements relevant to special education that were considered for infusion into early childhood courses during the pilot phase of the ACCEPT Project. Please read the following statements and circle the ratings that best reflect your perceptions.	Please provide a rating for each item based on **YOUR PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS TO INFUSE** related content.				Please provide a rating for each item based on the **EXTENT TO WHICH YOU INFUSED** related content.			
	1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree				**1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree**			
Educate CPCC students to promote child development and learning through varied delivery of instruction. (e.g., Teach individual students or small groups of students to reinforce learning and skills introduced by the teacher.)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Topic 5: Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.								
Educate CPCC students to collaborate with the lead teacher and early intervention team to select, adapt, modify and use classroom instruction, curricula, materials, activities, and the physical environment for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs. (e.g., Use and maintain assistive technology for children birth to 5 under the guidance of the lead teacher.)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on the needs of the children, their strengths, interests, and developmental growth.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on effectiveness of activities and lessons.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Topic 6: Build student skills to promote successful social interactions.								
Educate CPCC students to promote peer interaction skills and development of friendship in all children. (e.g., Teach children to effectively communicate their emotions and feelings.)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Statement	Preparedness				Extent of Infusion			
The topics and items below describe elements relevant to special education that were considered for infusion into early childhood courses during the pilot phase of the ACCEPT Project. Please read the following statements and circle the ratings that best reflect your perceptions.	Please provide a rating for each item based on **YOUR PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS TO INFUSE** related content.				Please provide a rating for each item based on the **EXTENT TO WHICH YOU INFUSED** related content.			
	1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree				**1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree**			
Educate CPCC students to develop and implement basic classroom rules and routines that do not undermine the dignity of the individual or the basic human rights of children with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to support children birth to 5 in their use of augmentative and alternative communication as well as other assistive technology as determined by the lead teacher and early intervention team.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Topic 7: Build child, family and community relationships that promote child development and learning.								
Educate CPCC students to provide support to families so that they can implement health, nutrition, and safety practices and procedures for children birth to 5 with exceptional needs.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals, and early intervention team members.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to provide accurate and timely information about children birth to 5 with exceptional needs to individuals who have the need and right to know under the guidance of the lead teacher.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Topic 8: Engage in professional and ethical practice at all times.								
Educate CPCC students to maintain the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, families, and agency employees.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Educate CPCC students to participate as a team member to enhance communication and problem-solving.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

Statement	Preparedness				Extent of Infusion			
The topics and items below describe elements relevant to special education that were considered for infusion into early childhood courses during the pilot phase of the ACCEPT Project. Please read the following statements and circle the ratings that best reflect your perceptions.	Please provide a rating for each item based on **YOUR PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS TO INFUSE** related content.				Please provide a rating for each item based on the **EXTENT TO WHICH YOU INFUSED** related content.			
	1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree				**1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree**			
Assist families in accessing information and resources.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

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Appendix C

Early Childhood Special Education Professional Development Needs Assessment

Section 1. Please circle the number of stars to indicate the importance of each topic for future professional development related to infusing special education content in early childhood education courses.

★Not Very Important   ★★Somewhat Important   ★★★Very Important

Topics	Importance
1. Understanding the purposes of programs for individuals with exceptional learning needs.	★★★
2. Gaining awareness of the effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.	★★★
3. Knowing the rights and responsibilities of families and children as they relate to individual learning needs.	★★★
4. Demonstrating sensitivity to the diversity of individuals and families.	★★★
5. Using strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies to accomplish instructional objectives when teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs.	★★★
6. Assisting in adapting instructional strategies and materials to meet the needs of exceptional learners.	★★★
7. Using strategies to facilitate effective integration into various settings.	★★★
8. Employing strategies that promote the learner's independence.	★★★
9. Making use of strategies in a variety of settings, to assist in the development of social skills.	★★★
10. Understanding the teacher's role in promoting the language development of children with different language needs.	★★★
11. Demonstrating the ability to promote family-centered, community-based, and culturally competent practices.	★★★
12. Learning how to engage in teaming and collaborating when making decisions and problem solving.	★★★
13. Using child and family assessments and evaluations.	★★★
14. Learning how to develop, interpret and implement an Individualized Family Service Plan [IFSP] and an Individualized Education Plan [IEP].	★★★

Section 2. In the space below indicate any other topics you believe are important for future professional

development related to infusing special education content in early childhood education courses.

Adapted from: Council for Exceptional Children. (2004). *Parability: The CEC paraeducator standards workbook*. Arlington, VA: Author. Retrieved from (http://www.cec.sped.org/ScriptContent/Orders/ProductDetail.cfm?section=CEC_Store&pc=P5691)

APPENDIX D

Accept Project Faculty Interview Questions

SELECTING RESOURCES

- How do you choose the resources you use in your classes related to special education?

    Prompts

    - Student prior knowledge and needs

    - Format of course

    - Replacement of past activities with new resources

    - Format or type

- Which resources are the most helpful? Why?

- When a resource was particularly interesting, was there an extension of the topic? If so, in what way?

- Which resources are the least helpful? Why?

USING RESOURCES

- How do you use the resources in your class?

    Prompts

    - Embed in lesson plans

    - Homework

    - Replacing a former assignment

    - Projects and presentations

    - Quizzes and tests

    - Discussions and summaries

IMPACT OF THE ACCEPT PROJECT ON STUDENTS

- What evidence do you see that indicates that students are applying the resources?

    Prompts

    - Comments in class

    - Observations of students working with children

- Changes in topics they choose for presentations and projects
- Comments from others
- Changes in dispositions (attitudes/values) about children with disabilities

IMPACT OF THE ACCEPT PROJECT ON YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- How has Project ACCEPT changed your teaching?
- How has Project ACCEPT changed your attitudes and dispositions about children with disabilities and families?
- Are you lacking resources for a particular topic?
- Are there any types of resources that you would like more of?
- Did the ACCEPT Project motivate you to find resources on your own? Yes/no question -- If yes, what were they?

PROJECT ACCEPT STAFF

- Is there any way we could have improved the usefulness of resources we provided?
- How might we have done a better job of providing resources for you?
- Do you plan to sustain the work? If yes, do you have what you need to do so?

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

- Do you have any advice you would like to give to the new community colleges/technical colleges as they begin to use these resources?
- Do you have any advice for us as we begin to collaborate with Mitchell?

IN CLOSING

- Do you have any additional comments you would like to share?

APPENDIX E
Course Calendar for Practicum

Week	Topic(s) Text Chapters Assignments Readings	Content/Activities Taught Prior to Working with ACCEPT Resource Title and Citation or URL OR Description of Activity	Content/Activities Taught After Working with ACCEPT Resource Title and Citation or URL OR Description of Activity
1	Topics 1-3 Building Your Portfolio	1. Share a post on the strengths and weaknesses you may have as a teacher at the beginning of this student teaching class.	Brainstorm a list of things you want to do during student teaching ☐ Example: Work with a child with diverse abilities and learn more about evidence based practices that support the child's development and learning.
2	Topic 4 Developing Your Resume	1. State five ways you will improve your areas of weakness in the classroom over the next 13 weeks. 2. Article by Childcare Exchange *Questions that Get You Great Teachers* by Jennifer Carsen ▪ Please explain at least ten facts you learned about while reading this article. Relate your personal experience with facts from the article you have experienced personally/professionally.	1. Thinking of Children with Diverse Abilities ☐ All the EDU courses hopefully have prepared you to adapt, modify and use resources, interventions, practices, activities, instruction, and the physical environment to meet the needs of all students, including those with diverse abilities. o Please be specific and list what things you learned in any or many of the EDU classes at MCC only that helps you understand children with diverse abilities. o Also post where you have been able to work in the past with children with diverse abilities before you complete 20 of your 144 hours doing so. 2. Critical Thinking Question-NAEYC Standard 5 ☐ What does the early childhood professional need to know to provide a meaningful and challenging curriculum for young children?

Advancing Community College Efforts in Paraprofessional Training (ACCEPT) Project
Faculty Outcomes of Professional Development to Build Evidence-Based Practices

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			☐ What are the benefits of a meaningful environment? ☐ What are the benefits of an inclusive setting or classroom for special needs children? ☐ How and why should early childhood professionals like yourself support inclusion and inclusive placements of children?
3	Topic 5 Building an Action Plan to Implement Projects	1. Please summarize this project that you plan individually that deals with NAEYC and what is your action plan for the development of this unique project worth 100 points that can be added later to your portfolio.	1. Submit an action plan that describes how you will implement an intervention for a child with diverse abilities, how you will record fidelity of implementation, and how you will measure child outcomes.
4	Topic 6 Building Social Skills to Promote Successful Social Interactions		1. I have a preschool child who is bullied almost everyday. ☐ Please give three websites that I can visit as a parent who needs to read about bullying. ☐ Please find a website on bullying for parents of exceptional children. 2. Name 5 software programs that that you would purchase for your center. ☐ Post these for everyone to see. Make sure at least one is from E-Bility.com http://e-bility.com/links/software.php 3. Go to this website and summarize the video and website. http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/resources/video/foundations-of-inclusioin-birth-to-five ☐ Also check this out http://www.fpg.unc.edu/news/research

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			4. Please research and describe what you found out about CSEFEL-what is this all about for young children?
5	Topic 7 Preparing to Teach	1. Name five things you have learned so far that you can use in your classroom of young children. Also post two U-tube video clips about student teaching or classroom teaching Birth to 8 years old. View each others clips and make a comment about what you learned from all four video clips. 2. Go to www.scholastic.com/teachers then go to lesson plans for kindergarten and look under We are Family lesson plans-discuss one of the lessons 3. If you were discussing what you need to learn in college to become a teacher-look at list I have started and add five more concepts that 1st graders should know about becoming an effective teacher and we would help this group want to become teachers when they grow up.	Read and summarize the July 2013 Synthesis of IES Research and Early Childhood Education.-***Activity provided by Project ACCEPT. Think of your experiences with each of these scenarios. ☐ Discuss 1 a-g and explain how many of these you have done in a classroom. Which of these have you not learned to do in a classroom? This is easy to read but practicing this is harder. Think of these items under number 1 when you are in your student teaching classroom. Sometimes we don't take the time to do 1d very well. Please share your examples and thoughts with 1 a-g. ☐ Look at number 2-8 in this article and share one example from each category that is something you have done in your classroom or during student teaching. 6 c you should know very well do to all the divergent questions you had to develop in lesson plans. 6 e brings up brainstorming which I would hope you all feel very comfortable with...3 d should remind you in Child Guidance class of true choices...
6	Topic 8 Resources		1. Review the Division of Early Childhood website. http://www.dec-sped.org/ 2. Review the Sage Publishing Company Website http://www.sagepub.com/home.nav 3. Name three journals in which you would find information on working with children with disabilities. 4. Explore the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) Website. http://www.cec.sped.org/

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7	Topic 9 Resources		Explore the CEC April Convention site. Name two workshops you would like to attend. http://www.cec.sped.org/Professional-Development/Annual-Convention/Sessions?sc_lang=en
8	Topic 10		Visit http://www.myspecialneedsnetwork.com/ ☐ Describe resources and information you find there that support your teaching of children with disabilities.
9	Topic 11 Resources		Visit http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules ☐ Describe three resources you found there that will support your teaching of children with disabilities.
10	Topic 12 Assistive Technology		Visit http://enablingdevices.com/catalog ☐ Name three products you would order for a child in your class with a disability. Why would you order this product?
11	Topic 13 Assistive Technology		Visit http://www.lekotek.org/ ☐ List five reasons a parent of a child with a disability would visit this website. Why might you use this website?
12	Topic 14 Assistive Technology		Watch http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK22tfJNOJ4 and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_Cabt-qjf4 to find out how to adapt toys in your classroom.
13	Topic 15 Embedding Learning Opportunities into Everyday Routines		Visit http://mrstrishsgarden.blogspot.com/ ☐ List three ideas or resources you plan to use during your practicum.
14	Topic 16 The Individualized EducationProgram		Read *Assistive Technology in the IEP: A Guide for IEP Teams* http://pattan.net-website.s3.amazonaws.com/files/materials/publications/do

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	(IEP)		cs/AT-In-IEP.pdf
			☐ Answer the following:
			   ○ Who is your local educational agency (LEA)?
			   ○ What are the eight sections of the IEP where one might document the use of AT for a child with a disability?

15	Topic 17 Teaching Children Who "Talk with Technology"		*Read AAC Basics and Implementation: How to Teach Students Who "Talk with Technology"* http://swaaac.com/Files/AssessandImp/AACBasicsandImplementationBook.pdf ☐ Write about the differences between teaching a child who "talks with technology" and one who doesn't.
16	Topic 18 Individualized Family Service plan		Read North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program Policy Bulletin: Assistive Technology Policy http://www.beearly.nc.gov/data/files/pdf/infanttoddlermanual/Bulletin27.pdf