



Advancing Community College Efforts in Paraprofessional Training (ACCEPT) Project

Gaston College Student Survey Summary

June 2015

The faculty from Gaston College (GC) and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) are currently collaborating to infuse early intervention and early childhood special education content, instruction, and practices into early childhood education coursework within the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree program in Early Childhood Education offered through GC. On March 13, 2014, the Gaston College Dean of Health and Human Services, the Chair of Human Services and Early Childhood Education, and the Program Coordinator of Early Childhood Education met to discuss the framework and process of the ACCEPT Project with UNCC ACCEPT Team members. Following that meeting, GC instructors and UNCC ACCEPT Team members partnered to select GC Early Childhood courses that would be infused both in the fall and the spring and “point people” that would lead infusion efforts for each course. Collaboration included creating, for each infused course, a syllabus providing information on resources and activities with special education content, instruction, and practices infused before and after the implementation of the ACCEPT Project. To assist with the development of infused course syllabi, GC instructors requested that UNC Charlotte ACCEPT Team members provide them with infused calendars that contained accessible and user-friendly resources recommended by UNC ACCEPT Team members.

At the beginning of the Spring 2015 semester, a survey was administered to scholars ($n = 212$) in eleven infused early childhood courses to provide baseline data for evaluating the effect of infusion on “perceived preparedness” to provide high quality and recommended early childhood practices in twenty-two competency areas. The survey was re-administered at the end of the semester to provide a comparison of scholar perceptions of their perceived preparedness. At the time of the post-test, a total of 15 courses in the program had been infused with resources and activities providing special education content, instruction, and practices. In addition to survey items addressing special education content, demographic information questions were also included to provide a basis for describing the scholars registered for the targeted MCC Early Childhood coursework. Usable responses were received from 173 (82%) of the scholars at the beginning of the semester and 39 (18%) scholars at the end of the semester. In light of traditionally low rates of community college course completion, the response was considered acceptable for further analysis.

Participants

Ninety-eight percent of the participating respondents were female and enrolled in at least one of the fifteen early childhood courses within the AAS degree program to be chosen for infusion at GC (see Appendix A). A description of each of these courses may be found in Appendix A.

Distribution across pre-test and post-test groups was similar for ethnicity ($X^2 = 3.68$, $df = 5$, $p > .01$), highest level of previous education ($X^2 = 1.41$, $df = 5$, $p > .01$), number of semesters attended ($X^2 = 3.92$, $df = 2$, $p > .01$), the percentage of scholars working with young children ($X^2 = 0.00$, $df = 1$, $p > .01$), intent to earn an associate degree ($X^2 = 5.18$, $df = 2$, $p > .01$), and intent to transfer to four-year institution ($X^2 = 0.54$, $df = 2$, $p > .01$). The percentage of scholars who had taken 0-3 courses ($X^2 = 25.91$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$) was larger for those responding to the pretest survey compared with the post-test. The reason for this may be similar to the statement made by the Early Childhood Program Coordinator at our previous collaborating community college. That is, the percentage of scholars who had taken 0-3 courses was larger for those taking the pre-test survey because so many Early Childhood Program scholars drop out each semester due to financial, personal or transportation realities

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challenging the opportunity for further education and the majority of these individuals have just started the program. In other words, more scholars taking 0-3 courses were available to take the survey at the beginning of the semester before obstacles led to their terminating coursework.

Pre-test. Individuals providing selected demographic information were between the ages of 16 and 24 (50.6%, $n = 86$) and 49.4% ($n = 84$) were older than 25 years of age. Ethnicity of the respondents included 64.7% ($n = 110$) White or Caucasian, 24.7% ($n = 42$) African American or Black, 5.3% ($n = 9$) Hispanic or Latino, 0.6% ($n = 1$) Asian or Pacific Rim, and 0.6% ($n = 1$) American Indian or Alaska Native; 4.1% ($n = 7$) were from other ethnic backgrounds. Compared to the urban community college and suburban community college with whom we had previously worked, a larger percentage of scholars were younger. Ethnicity of respondents did not differ from the suburban community college but did differ from the urban community college in that the percentage of African American scholars at GC was about 25% lower.

Responses to the question, “*Before entering this community college, what was your highest level of education?*”, indicated that 58.4% ($n = 101$) of the scholars had earned a high school diploma, 33.5% ($n = 58$) had taken some college coursework, 3.5% ($n = 6$) had an Associate’s (2-year) degree, .6 % ($n = 1$) had earned a Bachelor’s (4-year) degree, 2.9% ($n = 5$) had a certificate, 1.2% ($n = 2$) had less than a high school diploma. Responses to the question regarding number of semesters the scholars had attended GC indicated that 42.2% ($n = 73$) had attended 1-2 semesters, 29.5% ($n = 51$) 3-4 semesters, and 28.3% ($n = 49$) 5 or more semesters. Participant responses also indicated that 62.6% ($n = 107$) completed 0-3 courses at GC, 13.5% ($n = 23$) completed 4-6 courses, 4.1% ($n = 7$) 7-9 courses, and 19.9% ($n = 34$) completed 10 or more courses. These data were similar to those of the suburban community college but differed from the urban collaborating community college in that more scholars at GC were in the first two semesters of the program. While the number of courses taken was similar for participants at both colleges, those at the urban community college had been taking coursework for a longer period of time.

Of scholars responding to the question about their current job environment ($n = 170$), 40.0% ($n = 68$) reported that they worked with young children. Of scholars responding to the question about where they were working ($n = 122$), 65.6% ($n = 80$) were working at a center, 4.9 % ($n = 6$) were in a public school setting, 5.7% ($n = 7$) were at a family child care or group child care home, and 23.8% ($n = 29$) were at a Head Start facility. Responding to the question asking if they intended to earn an associate’s degree in early childhood from GC, 76.2% ($n = 131$) answered “yes,” 18.0% ($n = 31$) were undecided, and 5.8 % ($n = 10$) answered “no.” When asked if they planned to transfer to a four-year institution, 37.6% ($n = 64$) answered “yes,” 42.9% ($n = 73$) were undecided, and 19.4% ($n = 33$) answered “no.” Data indicated that compared to our previous collaborating community colleges scholars experiences working with young children mirrored those at the ACCEPT Project collaborating suburban community college while intentions for future studies in the field of education mirrored those scholars at the urban community college. While GC scholar’s experiences were limited, they had high expectations for completing their associate’s degree and nearly 80% either planned to transfer to a four-year university or at least had not eliminated that option from their future plans.

Post-test. Scholars ($N = 39$) completing the survey at the end of the semester were between the ages of 16 and 24 (48.7%, $n = 19$) or older than 25 years of age (51.3%, $n = 20$). The reported ethnicity of this group was 76.9% ($n = 30$) White or Caucasian, 12.8% ($n = 5$) African American or Black, and 7.7% ($n = 3$) Hispanic or Latino.

Responses to the question, “*Before entering this community college, what was your highest level of education?*” indicated that 66.7% ($n = 26$) of the participants had earned a high school diploma, 2.6% ($n = 1$) had an Associate’s (2-year) degree, 28.2% ($n = 11$) had some college coursework, and 2.6% ($n = 1$) had a certificate. Thirty-eight scholars ($N = 38$) responded to questions regarding the number of semesters attending and courses taken at GC. Scholars indicated that 31.6% ($n = 12$) had attended 1-2 semesters, 23.7% ($n = 9$) 3-4 semesters, and 44.7% ($n = 17$) 5 or more semesters. Participant responses also indicated that 18.4% ($n = 7$) completed 0-3

courses at GC, 36.8% ($n = 14$) completed 4-6 courses, 5.3% ($n = 2$) completed 7-9 courses, and 39.5% ($n = 15$) completed 10 or more courses.

Of scholars responding to the question about their current job environment ($N = 35$), 40% ($n = 14$) reported that they currently worked with young children. Of scholars responding to the question about where they were working ($N = 28$), 82.1% ($n = 23$) responded that they were working at a center and 17.9% ($n = 5$) were at a Head Start facility. One scholar responded to the question about the age group of children being educated indicating that she was working with children in other age groups. Responding to the question asking if they intended to earn an associate's degree in early childhood from GC, 92.1% ($n = 35$) responded "yes," and 7.9% ($n = 3$) were undecided. When asked if they planned to transfer to a four-year institution, 35.9% ($n = 4$) answered "yes," 48.7% ($n = 19$) were undecided, and 15.4% ($n = 6$) answered "no."

Procedure

A comprehensive review of early childhood competency-focused literature in both general and special education was conducted and 44 competency items were identified. The ACCEPT Project research team reviewed the pool of items to document any overlapping or duplicate content. The survey was refined by content reviewers with at least 35 years of experience in early childhood-special education among them. The reviewers provided feedback on (a) adequacy of overall coverage, (b) distinctiveness of each item, (c) clarity of each item, and (d) whether any items needed to be added or deleted. This activity was followed with a pilot study in which one instructor and scholars in her Language and Literacy course provided an additional level of feedback and opinions regarding item coverage and comprehensiveness. After each of the content validity checks, the survey instrument was refined to a final version consisting of 22 items representing 8 standard topics (see Table 1).

Instrument. The survey used Likert-type scale ratings with the stem: "Please provide a rating for each item based on your perceived preparedness." The response choices were (a) Strongly Disagree, (b) Disagree, (c) Agree, and (d) Strongly Agree. The pre-test survey was disseminated online via a *SurveyShare* link embedded in the scholar's Moodle course. Instructors informed scholars to complete the survey once and multiple responses were not allowed from the same email address. To obtain summary scores for subsequent analyses, we averaged responses across items within each topic. Pre-test ($r_{xx} = .98$) and post-test ($r_{xx} = .98$) total internal consistency reliability estimates based on standardized items (i.e., when all scale items are standardized to have equal means and variances) were high.

Results

Pre-test rating summaries including means and standard deviations reflecting "perceptions of preparedness" are in Table 2. The mean for each item was above 3.00, indicating that most scholars agreed or strongly agreed with all items reflecting perceived preparedness on the survey. Statements in which less than 90% or more scholars agreed or strongly agreed included:

- I am prepared to share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families, and other stakeholders.
- I am prepared to use federal, state, and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices.
- I am prepared to apply knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA.
- I am prepared to apply knowledge of Early Childhood/Special Education best practices as defined by professional organizations.
- I am prepared 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.

- I am prepared 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).
- I am prepared 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).
- I am prepared 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.
- I am prepared 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.

Post-test rating summaries including means and standard deviations reflecting “perceptions of preparedness” are in Table 3. The mean for all but three statements was 3.30 or above, indicating an increase in the extent to which most scholars agreed or strongly agreed with items reflecting perceived preparedness at the end of the semester. All standards received high perceived preparedness scores (i.e., 90% or more scholars strongly agreed or agreed with those statements).

Means, standard deviations, *t*-statistics, and effect sizes comparing pre-test and post-test topic scores are in Table 4. Post-test scores were consistently higher than pre-test scores (see Figure 1). Although statistically significant differences were not observed for any topics, the effect sizes for these comparisons reflected small practical changes.

Lessons Learned

Although the practical significance of changes observed from pre-test to post-test was small (i.e., effect sizes less than .29), the positive trends in these differences were encouraging especially because pre-test scores were so high. Another challenge to raising post-test scores was the fact that some early childhood coursework was rich with content and activities before the infusion process. Successfully reviewing all coursework to find content and activities that could be replaced or enhanced with more current inclusive practices took time and the fact that post-test scores were higher in every ACCEPT Standard Topic Area reflects the level of fidelity of implementation across the program demonstrated by Gaston instructors.

The higher post-test score reflected in the areas of *Instructional Strategies*, *Instructional Planning*, and *Family-Community Relations* reflects the individualized nature of the infusion process. While the faculty members at the two previous ACCEPT Project colleges requested a focus on laws, policies, and procedures specific to the field of special education, members of the Gaston College faculty requested a focus on inclusionary practices that would help their scholars teach any child in a diverse general education setting. Collaborating with UNC Charlotte ACCEPT faculty, Gaston instructors infused content and skills within the topics of Universal Design for Learning, Routines-Based Approach in Early Intervention, Formative Assessment, Teaming and Collaboration, and Use of Assistive Technology, among others across their core courses. These topic areas provided information on and opportunities for scholars to practice evidence-based strategies and interventions educators use in inclusive settings. Whole group face-to-face professional development provided training in the use of websites, videos, modules, and other resources containing content and activities related to these topics. These resources included the [CONNECT Modules](#), [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\)](#), [Results Matter Video Library](#), [The IRIS Center](#), [Head Start for Inclusion](#), [National Professional Development Center on Inclusion](#), [Quality Inclusive Practices: Resources and Landing Pads](#), [Universal Design for Learning](#), [Center for Inclusive Childcare](#), [National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials](#), [Tots-n-Tech](#), and [Center for Parent Information and Resources Library](#). Less professional development time was spent helping instructors build their infused course calendars because for the first time, UNC Charlotte point people had created calendars of recommended resources prior

to working with instructors. More time was spent exploring resources and talking about how they would be used and activities that would indicate scholar change.

Resources used by Gaston faculty were similar to those assigned to scholars at Central Piedmont and Mitchell Community College, except that at Gaston, scholars were expected to read articles of interest from journals like *Young Exceptional Children* and describe practical applications of the content. Visits to Gaston College face-to-face course sessions found scholars engaged in activities in which they practiced the interventions and strategies described in articles and other assigned resources. Scholars were aware of the nature and purpose of the ACCEPT Project and voiced their appreciation for content and activities that helped prepare them for diverse classrooms. One scholar shared that while working as a volunteer in a preschool classroom located in a public school, she had introduced teachers to interventions and strategies from her infused coursework. This included information on the implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), differentiating the curriculum, adapting the environment, and collaborating with families. In December, the principal hired her as a full-time paraprofessional based on high recommendations from educators in the school.

Another outcome of UNC Charlotte and Gaston College collaboration was that instructors began to search a wider area for practicum sites so that they could include those with higher quality programs and inclusionary practices. Although not all practicum students were able to travel to new-found sites, visits to an inclusion preschool, A Place to Grow, in Lincolnton NC, provided opportunities for them to practice their skills while working with typically and atypically developing children 0 to 5. Now under the umbrella of ComServ, Inc., this center has grown from initially about 20 students to a current enrollment of 54 children from one to six years of age. Because the school specializes in early intervention, special education, developmental delays and typical day care services for children, all teachers have their four year degree and a B-K teaching license, and teachers of the 1 and 2-year-olds are monitored by someone who has an infant-toddler family specialist certificate. Some teachers are attending local colleges to earn a master's degree in special education or social work.

Although fewer courses were infused at Gaston College compared to CPEC and Mitchell, all students in the program took at least three infused courses during the year according to the ACCEPT Project liaison. All core courses were infused except EDU 131: Child, Family, and Nutrition which was being "deconstructed" through collaborative efforts with the SCRIPT Project. Coursework infused included EDU 119: Introduction to Early Childhood Education; EDU 144: Child Development I; EDU 145: Child Development II; EDU 153: Health, Safety, and Nutrition; EDU 185: Cognitive and Language Development; EDU 146: Child Guidance; EDU 151: Creative Activities; EDU 234: Infants, Toddlers, and Twos; EDU 259: Curriculum Planning; EDU 28-0: Literacy Experiences; and EDU 284: Early Childhood Capstone Practicum. The fact that fewer courses were infused did not seem to have an effect on positive scholar outcomes as survey results were similar to those at Central Piedmont and Mitchell Community College.

Table 1
Student Survey

Topic	Item
<p>Know and share the laws, policies, procedures, and ethical principles that support and protect children birth to 5 with disabilities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am prepared to share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families, and other stakeholders. <li>2. I am prepared to use federal, state, and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices. <li>3. I am prepared to use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.
<p>Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. I am prepared 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. <li>5. I am prepared to apply knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA. <li>6. I am prepared to apply knowledge of Early Childhood/Special Education best practices as defined by professional organizations.
<p>Build skills to promote child development and learning and lead to life and school success.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. I am prepared to build early cognitive skills including oral communication and literacy skills. <li>8. I am prepared 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. <li>9. I am prepared to embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places.
<p>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.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. I am prepared 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). <li>11. I am prepared 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).

Topic	Item
Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.	12. I am prepared 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).
	13. I am prepared to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on the needs of the children, their strengths, interests, and developmental growth.
	14. I am prepared to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on effectiveness of activities and lessons.
Build student skills to promote successful social interactions.	15. I am prepared to promote peer interaction skills and development of friendship in all children (e.g., teach children to effectively communicate their emotions and feelings).
	16. I am prepared 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.
	17. I am prepared 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.
Build child, family, and community relationships that promote child development and learning.	18. I am prepared 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.
	19. I am prepared to demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals, and early intervention team members.
	20. I am prepared 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.
Engage in professional and ethical practice at all times.	21. I am prepared to maintain the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, families, and agency employees.
	22. I am prepared to participate as a team member to enhance communication and problem-solving.

Table 2

Summary of Spring 2015 Student Survey Pre-Test Responses

The topics below describe general areas relevant to special education. Please read each of the related items and circle the rating that best reflects your perception related to it.	Perceived Preparedness Rating					
	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Topic 1: Know and share the laws, policies, procedures, and ethical principles that support and protect children birth to 5 with disabilities.						
I am prepared to share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families, and other stakeholders.	4.0	9.2	47.4	39.3	3.22	0.78
I am prepared to use federal, state, and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices.	3.5	11.0	45.1	40.5	3.23	0.78
I am prepared to use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.	3.5	7.5	48.6	40.5	3.26	0.72
Topic 2: Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.						
I am prepared 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.	3.6	5.9	52.1	38.5	3.25	0.72
I am prepared to apply knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA.	5.3	20.0	38.8	35.9	3.05	0.88
I am prepared to apply knowledge of Early Childhood/Special Education best practices as defined by professional organizations.	3.5	11.0	47.7	37.8	3.20	0.77
Topic 3: Build skills to promote child development and learning and lead to life and school success.						
I am prepared to build early cognitive skills including oral communication and literacy skills.	3.5	4.7	43.0	48.8	3.37	0.73
I am prepared 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.	3.6	8.3	44.4	43.8	3.28	0.77
I am prepared to embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places.	3.5	2.9	48.8	44.8	3.35	0.71

The topics below describe general areas relevant to special education. Please read each of the related items and circle the rating that best reflects your perception related to it.

Perceived Preparedness Rating

SD D A SA M SD

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.

I am prepared 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).

3.6 7.8 40.4 48.2 3.33 0.77

I am prepared 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).

3.6 3.6 47.9 45.0 3.34 0.72

Topic 5: Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.

I am prepared 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).

3.6 7.1 40.8 48.5 3.34 0.76

I am prepared to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on the needs of the children, their strengths, interests, and developmental growth.

3.5 2.9 46.5 47.1 3.37 0.71

I am prepared to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on effectiveness of activities and lessons.

3.5 2.9 47.4 46.2 3.36 0.71

Topic 6: Build student skills to promote successful social interactions.

I am prepared to promote peer interaction skills and development of friendship in all children (e.g., teach children to effectively communicate their emotions and feelings).

3.6 3.6 45.6 47.3 3.37 0.72

I am prepared 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.

3.5 4.1 46.8 45.6 3.35 0.72

The topics below describe general areas relevant to special education. Please read each of the related items and circle the rating that best reflects your perception related to it.	Perceived Preparedness Rating					
	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
I am prepared 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.	3.5	7.6	48.3	40.7	3.26	0.75
Topic 7: Build child, family, and community relationships that promote child development and learning.						
I am prepared 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.	3.5	6.9	45.7	43.9	3.30	0.75
I am prepared to demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals, and early intervention team members.	3.5	4.1	40.9	51.5	3.40	0.73
I am prepared 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.	3.5	5.3	48.2	42.9	3.31	0.73
Topic 8: Engage in professional and ethical practice at all times.						
I am prepared to maintain the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, families, and agency employees.	4.1	3.0	42.0	50.9	3.40	0.74
I am prepared to participate as a team member to enhance communication and problem-solving.	4.1	2.4	41.4	52.1	3.41	0.74

Table 3

Summary of Spring 2015 Student Survey Post-Test Responses

The topics below describe general areas relevant to special education. Please read each of the related items and circle the rating that best reflects your perception related to it.	Perceived Preparedness Rating					
	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
Topic 1: Know and share the laws, policies, procedures, and ethical principles that support and protect children birth to 5 with disabilities.						
I am prepared to share with others the rights and responsibilities of children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, their families, and other stakeholders.	2.6	2.6	56.4	38.5	3.31	0.66
I am prepared to use federal, state, and local policies for confidential communication about early intervention team practices.	2.6	0.0	59.0	38.5	3.33	0.62
I am prepared to use appropriate educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.	2.6	0.0	53.8	43.6	3.39	0.63
Topic 2: Develop and use instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.						
I am prepared 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.	2.6	0.0	51.3	46.2	3.41	0.64
I am prepared to apply knowledge of the etiology, characteristics, and educational implications of each Category of Disability under IDEA.	2.6	5.1	59.0	33.3	3.23	0.67
I am prepared to apply knowledge of Early Childhood/Special Education best practices as defined by professional organizations.	2.6	2.6	56.4	38.5	3.31	0.66
Topic 3: Build skills to promote child development and learning and lead to life and school success.						
I am prepared to build early cognitive skills including oral communication and literacy skills.	5.1	2.6	51.3	41.0	3.28	0.76
I am prepared 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.	2.6	5.1	56.4	35.9	3.26	0.68
I am prepared to embed learning opportunities in everyday routines, relationships, activities, and places.	2.6	00.0	51.3	46.2	3.41	0.64

The topics below describe general areas relevant to special education. Please read each of the related items and circle the rating that best reflects your perception related to it.

Perceived Preparedness Rating

SD D A SA M SD

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.

I am prepared 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).

2.6 0.0 51.3 46.2 3.41 0.64

I am prepared 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).

2.6 0.0 51.3 46.2 3.41 0.64

Topic 5: Use assessment data from multiple sources to create, modify, and adapt a safe learning environment that promotes the achievement of all learners.

I am prepared 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).

2.6 0.0 53.8 43.6 3.39 0.63

I am prepared to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on the needs of the children, their strengths, interests, and developmental growth.

2.7 0.0 51.4 45.9 3.41 0.64

I am prepared to collect information under the guidance of the lead teacher on effectiveness of activities and lessons.

2.6 0.0 50.0 47.4 3.42 0.64

Topic 6: Build student skills to promote successful social interactions.

I am prepared to promote peer interaction skills and development of friendship in all children (e.g., teach children to effectively communicate their emotions and feelings).

2.6 0.0 50.0 47.4 3.42 0.64

I am prepared 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.

2.6 0.0 46.2 51.3 3.46 0.64

The topics below describe general areas relevant to special education. Please read each of the related items and circle the rating that best reflects your perception related to it.	Perceived Preparedness Rating					
	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
I am prepared 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.	0.0	0.0	51.4	48.6	3.49	0.51
Topic 7: Build child, family, and community relationships that promote child development and learning.						
I am prepared 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.	0.0	0.0	48.7	51.3	3.51	0.51
I am prepared to demonstrate and maintain a positive relationship with students, family members, colleagues, service professionals, and early intervention team members.	0.0	0.0	48.7	51.3	3.51	0.51
I am prepared 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.	0.0	0.0	39.5	60.5	3.61	0.50
Topic 8: Engage in professional and ethical practice at all times.						
I am prepared to maintain the dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of all children birth to 5 with exceptional needs, families, and agency employees.	0.0	0.0	41.0	59.0	3.60	0.50
I am prepared to participate as a team member to enhance communication and problem-solving.	0.0	0.0	48.6	51.4	3.51	0.51

Table 4

Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Topic Scores

Topic	Pre-Test (n = 43)		Post-Test (n = 10)		Obtained t	ES
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Laws, Policies, and Procedures	3.24	0.72	3.34	0.60	-0.86 ¹	0.14
Instructional Strategies	3.12	0.77	3.32	0.62	-1.49 ¹	0.26
Child Development	3.30	0.74	3.32	0.63	-0.15 ¹	0.03
Instructional Planning	3.29	0.77	3.41	0.63	-0.92 ¹	0.16
Assessment Data	3.30	0.76	3.32	0.67	-0.12 ¹	0.03
Social Interactions	3.28	0.74	3.37	0.70	-0.68 ¹	0.12
Family-Community Relations	3.30	0.72	3.51	0.53	-1.71 ¹	0.29
Professional-Ethical Behavior	3.35	0.79	3.46	0.59	-0.86 ¹	0.14

¹p > .01; ES = (M_{Posttest} - M_{pretest})/SD_{Pretest}

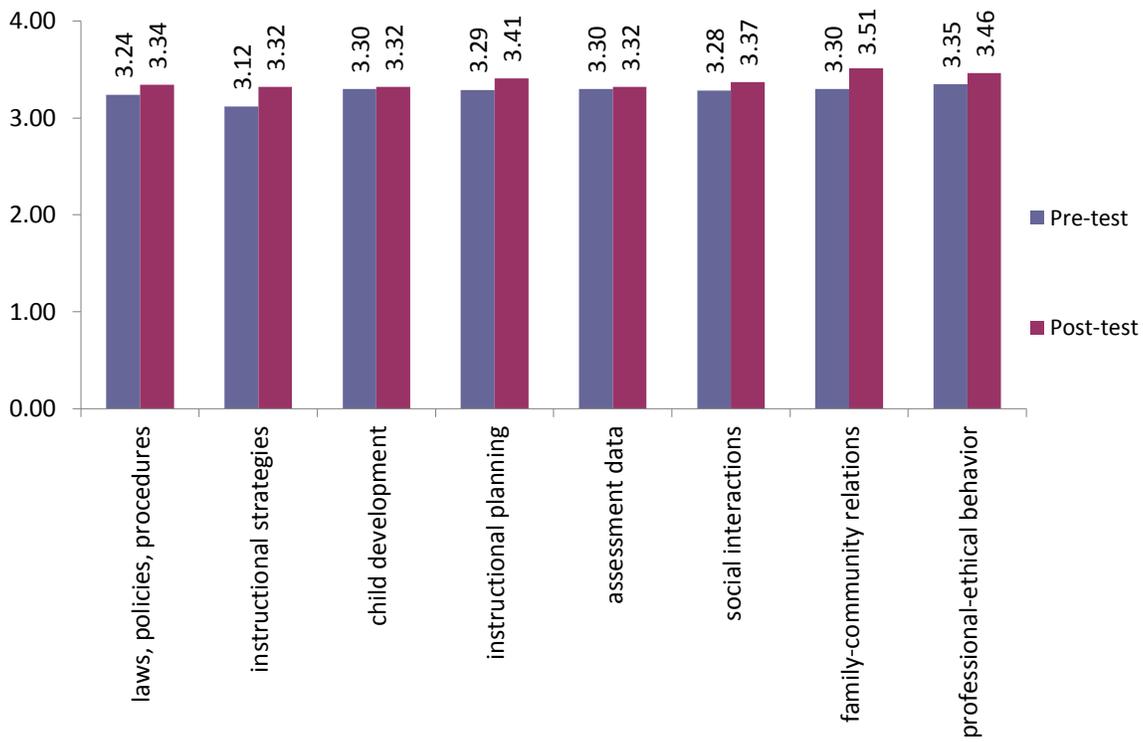


Figure 1. Comparison of average responses across topics included in survey.

Appendix A

Gaston Community College
2014-2015 Course Infusion

Course	Description
EDU 119 Introduction to ECE	This course covers the foundations of the education profession, the diverse educational settings for young children, professionalism and planning developmentally appropriate programs for all children. Topics include historical foundations, program types, professionalism, and creating inclusive environments and curriculum responsive to the needs of all children and families . Upon completion, students should be able to environments and activity plans appropriate for all children.
EDU 131 Child, Family, and Community	This course covers the development of partnerships between culturally and linguistically diverse families, children, schools and communities. Emphasis is placed on developing skills and identifying benefits for establishing, supporting, and maintaining respectful, collaborative relationships between diverse families, programs/schools, and community agencies/resources. Upon completion, students should be able to explain appropriate relationships between families, educators, and professionals that enhance development and educational experiences of all children.
EDU 144 Child Development I	This course includes the theories of child development, needs, milestones, and factors that influence development, from conception through approximately 36 months. Upon completion, students should be able to compare/ contrast typical/atypical developmental characteristics , explain environmental factors that impact development, and identify strategies for enhancing development.
EDU 145 Child Development II	This course includes the theories of child development, needs, milestones, and factors that influence development, from preschool through middle childhood. Upon completion, students should be able to compare/ contrast typical/atypical developmental characteristics , explain environmental factors that impact development, and identify strategies for enhancing development.
EDU 146 Child Guidance	This course introduces principles and practical techniques including the design of learning environments for providing developmentally appropriate guidance for all children. Emphasis is placed on observation skills, cultural influences, underlying causes of behavior, appropriate expectations, and the role of communication and guidance. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate strategies for preventing problem behaviors, teaching appropriate/acceptable behaviors such as problem, solving, regulating behavior, negotiation, setting limits and recognizing at risk behaviors.

Course	Description
EDU 151 Creative Activities	This course covers planning, creation and adaptation of developmentally supportive learning environments with attention to curriculum, interactions, teaching practices and learning materials. Emphasis is placed on creating and adapting integrated, meaningful, challenging and engaging developmentally supportive learning experiences in art, music, movement and physical skills and dramatics. Upon completion, students should be able to create, manage, adapt and evaluate developmentally supportive learning materials, experiences and environments.
EDU 153 Health, Safety, and Nutrition	This course covers promoting and maintaining the health and well-being of all children. Topics include health and nutritional guidelines, maintaining safe and healthy learning environments, recognition and reporting of abuse and neglect and state regulations. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of health, safety, and nutritional needs, safe learning environments, and adhere to state regulations.
EDU 221 Children with Exceptionalities	This course introduces children with exceptionalities, their families, support services, inclusive/diverse settings, and educational/family plans based on the foundations of child development. Emphasis is placed on the characteristics of exceptionalities, observation and assessment of children, strategies for adapting the learning environment, and identification of community resources. Upon completion, students should be able to recognize diverse abilities, describe the referral process, and depict collaboration with families/professionals to plan/implement, and promote best practice.
EDU 234 Infants, Toddlers, and Twos	This course covers the unique needs and rapid changes that occur in the first three years of life and the inter-related factors that influence development. Emphasis is placed on recognizing and supporting developmental milestones through purposeful strategies, responsive care routines and identifying elements of quality, inclusive early care and education . Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate respectful relationships that provide a foundation for healthy infant/toddler/twos development, plan/select activities/materials, and partner with diverse families.
EDU 259 Curriculum Planning	This course is designed to focus on curriculum planning for three to five year olds. Topics include philosophy, curriculum models, indoor and outdoor environments, scheduling, authentic assessment, and planning developmentally appropriate experiences. Upon completion, students should be able to evaluate children's development, critique curriculum, plan for individual and group needs, and assess and create quality environments.

Course	Description
EDU 261 Early Childhood Administration I	This course introduces principles of basic programming and staffing, budgeting/financial management and marketing. Upon completion, students should be able to develop components of program/personnel handbooks, a program budget, and demonstrate knowledge of fundamental marketing strategies and NC standards.
EDU 271 Educational Technology	This course introduces the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning in all educational settings. Topics include technology concepts, instructional strategies, materials and adaptive technology for children with exceptionalities , facilitation of assessment/evaluation, and ethical issues surrounding the use of technology. Upon completion, students should be able to apply technology-enhanced instructional strategies and demonstrate appropriate technology skills in educational environment.
EDU 280 Language and Literacy Experiences	This course is designed to expand students' understanding of children's language and literacy development and provides strategies for enhancing language/literacy experiences in an enriched environment. Topics include the integration of literacy concepts throughout the curriculum, appropriate observations/assessments and inclusive practices . Upon completion, students should be able to select, plan, implement and evaluate developmentally appropriate and diverse language/literacy experiences.
EDU 284 Capstone Practicum	This course is designed to allow students to apply skills in a three star (minimum) or NAEYC accredited or equivalent, quality early childhood environment. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate developmentally appropriate plans/assessments, appropriate guidance techniques and ethical/professional behaviors as indicated by assignments and onsite faculty visits.
EDU 162 Observations and Assessments	This course explores developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive observation and assessment strategies for studying the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children birth through eight years. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate skills in using systematic observation and documentation strategies to develop trusting relationships with children and to plan appropriate programs, environments, and activities in early childhood settings.

*In bold=coursework or objective(s) specific to promoting the development and learning of children with disabilities