

Project ACCEPT
Early Childhood Special Education Professional Development Needs Assessment Summary
February 2012

Faculty from Central Piedmont Community College (CPC) and 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 CPC. In an effort to redesign coursework, needs surveys were administered to CPC students and faculty to determine areas of focus for inclusion of special education content (e.g., family-centered practices, teaming and collaboration, child and family assessment and evaluation, the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), the development and implementation of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), instructional practices and teaching methods, and natural environment and inclusive practices).

The results of the Early Childhood Special Education Professional Development Needs Assessment (see Appendix A) administered to eight faculty members at CPC on February 16, 2012 indicate that they believe the top three topics of importance (i.e., ratings greater than 2.5 on 3-point scale) for future professional development related to infusing special education content in early childhood education courses are (a) using strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies to accomplish instructional objectives when teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs, (b) assisting in adapting instructional strategies and materials to meet the needs of exceptional learners, and (c) employing strategies that promote the learner's independence. Less importance (i.e., ratings less than 2.0) was assigned to four items: Gaining awareness of the effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life; demonstrating sensitivity to the diversity of individuals and families; demonstrating the ability to promote family-centered, community-based, and culturally competent practices; and, learning how to engage in teaming and collaborating when making decisions and problem solving. Means and standard deviations for each area of focus on the needs assessment are presented in Table 1 and results of the assessment are graphically displayed in Figure 1. The results support those of two previously administered student surveys.

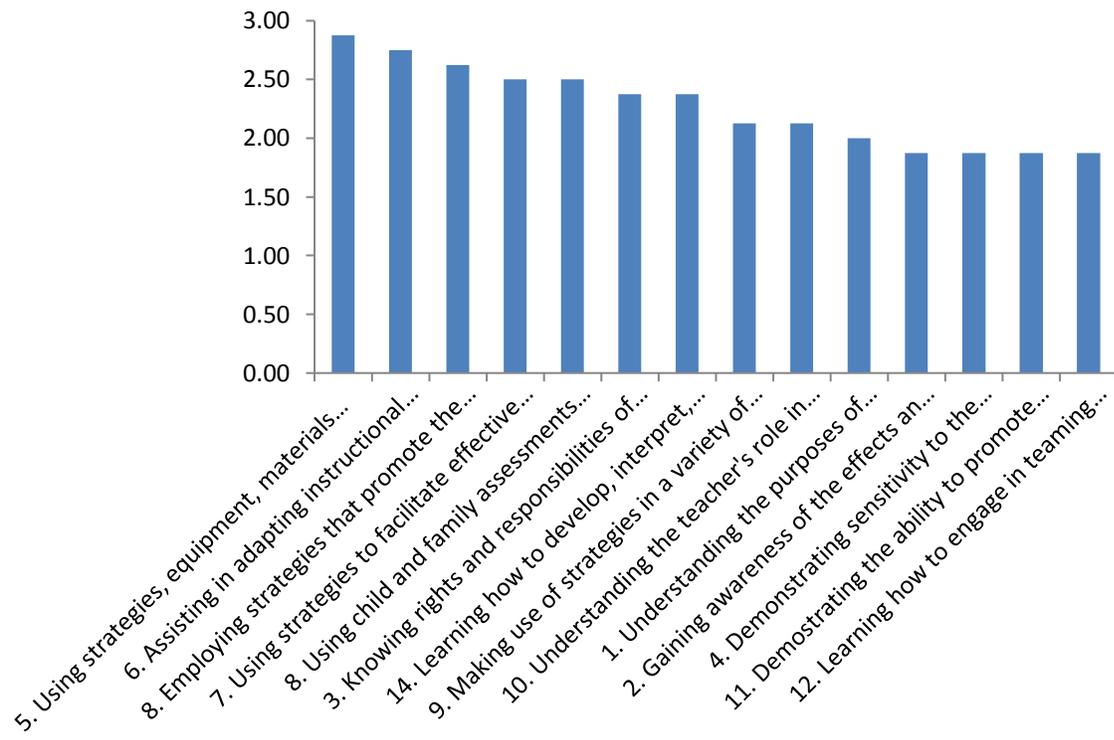
Table 1

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

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Figure 1. Importance of each topic for future professional development related to infusing special education content in early childhood education courses.



Appendix A. 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.