**Teaching in Higher Education**

**Sample Syllabus**

## Course Description

This course prepares doctoral students to design and deliver effective higher education programs in early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE). Emphasizing standards-based curriculum development, evidence-based teaching, and inclusive practices, students engage in observation, analysis, and applied projects to build expertise in course design, supervision, and reflective mentoring for diverse learners.

## Course Learning Objectives

As a result of active participation and successful completion of course requirements, students will be able to:

1. Design and develop an institution of higher education (IHE) program of study, including multiple courses and practicum experiences, that aligns with EI/ECSE personnel standards and incorporates evidence-based pedagogy for infants and young children with IDD/ASD and their families.
2. Apply evidence-based instructional practices and universal design principles when creating syllabi, teaching courses, and supporting diverse learners in personnel preparation programs.
3. Develop individualized learning plans and maintain documentation (e.g., meeting notes, feedback records) that reflect collaborative goals and support student competency in interventions for infants and young children with IDD/ASD.
4. Complete targeted modules on supervision, mentorship, and course/program design, ensuring all instructional materials and activities align with DEC Recommended Practices, EI/ECSE personnel standards, and relevant state requirements.

## Recommended Texts

**Readings:**

Ananga, P., & Biney, I. K. (2017). Comparing face-to-face and online teaching and learning in higher education. *MIER Journal of Educational Studies Trends and Practices*, 165-179.

Børte, K., Nesje, K., & Lillejord, S. (2020). Barriers to student active learning in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *28*(3), 597–615. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1839746

Bruder, M. B., & Dunst, C. J. (2005). Personnel Preparation in Recommended Early Intervention Practices: Degree of Emphasis Across Disciplines: Degree of Emphasis Across Disciplines. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *25*(1), 25-33. https://doi.org/10.1177/02711214050250010301 (Original work published 2005)

Dunst, Carl J. PhD. Implications of Evidence-Based Practices for Personnel Preparation Development in Early Childhood Intervention. Infants & Young Children 22(1):p 44-53, January 2009. | DOI: 10.1097/01.IYC.0000343336.34528.ea

Hancock, C. L., Morgan, C. W., & Holly, J. (2021). Counteracting Dysconscious Racism and Ableism Through Fieldwork: Applying DisCrit Classroom Ecology in Early Childhood Personnel Preparation. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *41*(1), 45-56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121421989797 (Original work published 2021)

Heafner, T., & PeTTy, T. (2016). Using edTPA to compare online and face to face teacher preparation programs. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, *24*(2), 153-186.

Mickelson, A. M., & Vestal, A. R. (2025). National Trends in Blended Preparation: A Landscape Marked by Persistent Variability. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *45*(3), 194-209. https://doi.org/10.1177/02711214251365976 (Original work published 2025)

O'Brien, K. M., Nagro, S. A., Binkert, G. D., Szocik, K., & Gerry, M. (2024). Field experiences in special education teacher preparation: A review of the literature. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, *47*(1), 5-25.

Stayton, Vicki D. PhD. Preparation of Early Childhood Special Educators for Inclusive and Interdisciplinary Settings. Infants & Young Children 28(2):p 113-122, April/June 2015. | DOI: 10.1097/IYC.0000000000000030

Theobald, R. J., Goldhaber, D. D., Naito, N., & Stein, M. L. (2021). The special education teacher pipeline: Teacher preparation, workforce entry, and retention. *Exceptional Children*, *88*(1), 65-80.

Winton, P. J. (2000). Early Childhood Intervention Personnel Preparation: Backward Mapping for Future Planning: Backward Mapping for Future Planning. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, *20*(2), 87-94. https://doi.org/10.1177/027112140002000204 (Original work published 2000)

**Accommodations**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 require the institution to provide academic adjustments or accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students seeking academic adjustments or accommodations must self-identify with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities on the appropriate campus.

**Attendance**

Since many of the classes involve activities, videotapes, discussion, etc., regular attendance is vital to gain maximum benefit. Because this is an 8 weeks course, each class member needs to make every effort to be in attendance at each class. Anyone who misses more than one class will lose 5 points for each class missed after the first absence. Significant tardiness or early departure beyond 15 minutes will count as an absence. If you know ahead of time you will not be in class, please contact the instructor the day before the class.

**Communicating with the Instructor**

All correspondences from the instructor to the students by way of announcements, updates, assignments, and so forth, will be communicated via school email or online learning management system if not verbally in class. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their university e-mail is corrected, provided, and valid. Failure to do so may result is missing important information that could negatively impact your grade. Please be mindful of professionalism.

**Course Outline**

The following schedule is subject to change. For any course syllabuses posted prior to the beginning of the semester, the course instructor reserves the right to make changes prior to or during the semester. The course instructor will notify students, via e-mail or verbal announcements when changes are made in the requirements and/or grading of this course. *The course instructor reserves the right to revise the schedule/assignments if needed.*

| Week | Topics | Reading | Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction to Instruction in Higher Education & Adult Learning | Theobald et al., (2021); Winton, (2000); Dunst (2009) | **In Class Activity**: In small groups, reflect on a memorable childhood learning experience with an adult learning experience.<br>- Identify where your experiences reflect Knowles' principles of andragogy (self-concept, readiness to learn, experience, orientation to learning, motivation).<br>- Conclude with at least one insight about how adult learning differs from child learning in your life. |
| 2 | Instructional Format – Fully Online | Ananga & Biney (2017); Anderson (2003);<br><br>HIDOC Framework Checklist | **In-Class Activity:** Students will work in small groups to design an online course module using the HIDOC Framework, focusing on learner analysis, measurable outcomes, and aligned activities. Each group will create a one-page module plan that includes structure, assessments, instructional materials, and technology choices, ensuring accessibility and student- |

| | | | centered learning. Groups will present their design in a brief 2-minute summary to the class.<br><br>**Observing Teaching Across Modalities** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Instructional Format - Hybrid | Heafner & Petty (2016) | **In-class Activity:** In groups of 3–4, design one hybrid learning activity for a graduate-level course that:<br>• Combines online and in-person components strategically.<br>• Incorporates active learning (e.g., problem-solving, discussion).<br>• Includes a plan for feedback and assessment.<br><br>**Observing Teaching Across Modalities** |
| 4 | Grading | Rubric & Assessments<br><br>Rubrics | **In-Class Activity:** Students will review institutional grading policy. How will you apply this to individual courses? What does this look for specific assignments? Use the mapping tool. is to individual courses? What does this look for specific assignments? Use the mapping tool. |
| 5 | Advising & Mentorship | Academic Advising | **In-Class Activity:** As future faculty, academic advising is a key part of your role. In this discussion, consider how NACADA's pillars |

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| | | | guide effective advising. How does the "Concept of Academic Advising" frame advising as teaching and learning? |
| 6 | Fieldwork & Student Teaching | O'Brien et al., (2024); Hancock et al., (2021) | **In-Class Activity:** After reading, ECIPC fieldwork guide – plan a small group discussion and presentation to share with (a) student teachers and (b) mentors as they both prepare for the first day of student teaching. |
| 7 | University Supervision | ECIPC Fieldwork Guide | **Constructive Feedback and Reflective Mentoring** This assignment will develop doctoral students' skills in observing teaching practices and providing evidence-based, strengths-focused feedback that promotes reflective growth in undergraduate student teachers. |
| 8 | Programmatic Decisions – Big Picture | Bruder & Dunst (2005); Stayton (2015) | **Course Design** Students will apply principles of evidence-based instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and EI/ECSE personnel standards to create a fully online course tailored for undergraduate students preparing to work in early childhood special education. |

**Major Assignments**

1. **Observing Teaching Across Modalities: Online and Hybrid**

a. This assignment will develop doctoral students' ability to critically analyze teaching practices across different delivery formats and reflect on implications for effective higher education instruction.

b. Observation Requirement
   i. Conduct two observations:
      1. One fully online course
      2. One hybrid course
   ii. Each observation should last at least 50 minutes and include active note-taking.

c. Observation Guidance
   i. For each observation, focus on these dimensions:
   ii. Course Structure & Organization
      1. How is the session structured (agenda, pacing, transitions)?
      2. Are learning objectives clearly communicated?
   iii. Teaching Strategies
      1. What instructional methods are used (lecture, discussion, breakout groups)?
      2. How does the instructor check for understanding?
   iv. Student Engagement
   v. How do students participate (questions, chat, polls)?
   vi. Are strategies used to foster interaction and collaboration?

d. Technology Integration
   i. What tools/platforms are used (LMS, Zoom, interactive apps)?
   ii. Are they used effectively to support learning?

e. Inclusivity & Accessibility
   i. How does the instructor address diverse learning needs?
   ii. Are materials and activities accessible (captions, multiple formats)?

f. Assessment & Feedback
   i. Are formative assessments or feedback provided during the session?
   ii. How is student progress monitored?

2. **Constructive Feedback and Reflective Mentoring**
   a. This assignment will develop doctoral students' skills in observing teaching practices and providing evidence-based, strengths-focused feedback that promotes reflective growth in undergraduate student teachers.
   b. Watch a pre-recorded video of an undergraduate student teacher during a lesson or intervention session.
   c. Use an Observation Guide based on the ECIPC framework:
      i. Planning & Preparation: Were objectives clear and developmentally appropriate?
      ii. Instructional Strategies: Were evidence-based practices used?
      iii. Engagement: How were children/families engaged?
      iv. Inclusivity: Were cultural, linguistic, and ability differences respected?
      v. Assessment: Was data collected or used to inform instruction?

      vi.    Professional Disposition: Did the student demonstrate professionalism and ethical practice?

  d.  Prepare a 1,000-word feedback report. This will model what would say to an undergraduate student as well as what written feedback you would share. It should include:

      i.    Observation Summary: Objective notes on what was observed.

      ii.    Strengths-Based Feedback: Highlight effective practices and professional behaviors.

      iii.    Growth Areas: Identify 2–3 areas for improvement with actionable suggestions.

      iv.    Reflective Questions: Include at least 3 open-ended questions to guide the student's self-reflection.

      v.    Alignment with Standards: Reference relevant EI/ECSE standards.

      vi.    Next Steps: Suggest resources or strategies for continued growth.

3. **Mapping Existing Higher Education Syllabi**

  a.  This assignment develops doctoral students' ability to critically evaluate and align existing course syllabi with professional standards and evidence-based practices for teacher preparation.

  b.  Collect Syllabi

      i.    Gather 3–4 syllabi from courses in teacher education or related fields (preferably from your institution or open-access repositories).

      ii.    Ensure syllabi include objectives, topics, readings, assignments, and assessment strategies.

  c.  Analyze and Enter into the Tool

      i.    For each syllabus:

          1.  Identify which EI/ECSE Standard(s) it addresses (from the seven provided in the tool).

          2.  Enter relevant information into the Curriculum Planning Tool:

              a.  Course Title & Description

              b.  Learning Objectives

              c.  Course Topics/Activities

              d.  Readings

              e.  Assignments

              f.  Field/Practicum Components (if applicable)

      ii.    Note any gaps where standards are not addressed.

  d.  Comparative Analysis

      i.    Create a summary table or chart comparing:

      ii.    Which standards are most/least represented across syllabi.

      iii.    Common strengths and weaknesses.

      iv.    Opportunities for improvement.

  e.  Develop a presentation to share with the whole group. The course will conduct a mock curriculum committee meeting.

4. **Course Design**

a. Students will apply principles of evidence-based instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and EI/ECSE personnel standards to create a fully online course tailored for undergraduate students preparing to work in early childhood special education.
b. Course Overview
    i. Define the course title, description, and target audience.
    ii. Identify 2–3 EI/ECSE standards the course will address.
c. Learning Outcomes
    i. Write 4–6 measurable, student-centered learning outcomes aligned with professional standards and real-world application.
d. Course Structure
    i. Outline 15 modules with topics, objectives, and key activities.
e. Instructional Strategies & Materials
    i. Select readings, videos, and interactive tools that support accessibility and engagement.
    ii. Incorporate adult learning and UDL principles (multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression).
f. Assessments & Feedback
    i. Design one formative assessment (e.g., discussion board, quiz) and one summative assessment (e.g., project, case study).
    ii. Explain how feedback will be provided online.
g. Technology Integration
    i. Choose at least two technology tools (e.g., LMS features, video conferencing, interactive apps) and justify their use for accessibility and engagement.

**Course Grading**

Assignments are due by 11:59pm on the indicated date. Late assignments without previous written approval of the instructor will incur a 50% penalty for the first time and lost all points beyond. This instructor and learners are required to adheres to the University's Academic Integrity policy. Any plagiarism will not be tolerance and referred to the Academic Integrity Office. And the learners will be given an "F" in the course and be recommended to the Student Conduct Office.

Learners will be evaluated based upon the assignments described below. The plus/minus grading system and scale is as follows:

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
| --- | --- |
| A | 93 and above |
| A- | 90-92 |
| B+ | 88-89 |
| B | 83-87 |
| B- | 80-82 |

| Letter Grade | Grade Range |
|---|---|
| C+ | 78-79 |
| C | 73-77 |
| C- | 70-72 |
| D | 60-69 |
| F | 59 and below |

**Course Grading Systems**

| Component | Weight for final grade |
|---|---|
| Course Design | 30% |
| Mapping Syllabi | 30% |
| Constructive Feedback | 30% |
| Observations | 20% |

**Resources**

Resources to supplement the Syllabus:

- Academic Advising
- Assessment & Assignment Alignment
- Classroom Assessment Techniques
- Course Delivery
- Designing Your Course
- First Day of Class
- Instructor Materials
- Online Instruction
- Rubrics & Assessments

**Journals in EI/ECSE**

Below are examples of journals that publish topics about EI/ECSE. Faculty may want to explain how to use articles to support practice and to examine current research. Clarify the difference between practitioner-based journals and research-based journals.

- *Child Development*
- *Journal of Early Intervention*
- *Journal of Pediatrics*
- *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*
- *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*
- *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*
- *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*
- *Pediatric Research*
- *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*
- *Young Exceptional Children*

**ECiDC** Early Childhood Intervention
Doctoral Consortium

Creating Leaders in Intensive Interventions for Infants, Young Children and Their Families