

A Curriculum Review Model to Develop Appropriately Trained Paraeducators

Denise Uitto

The University of Akron Wayne College

Donna Sobel

University of Colorado Denver

Ritu Chopra

University of Colorado Denver



November 10, 2011

TED Conference, Austin, TX

Project PreP Objectives (K-12 focus)-

funded by Office of Special Education Programs

1. To align existing paraeducator pre-service across the Colorado Community College system with national standards.
2. To train community college faculty to deliver the revised program.
3. To utilize current networks accessed by community college admissions and recruitment specialists to recruit pre-service paraeducators into the new programs.
4. To train mentor teachers in paraeducator supervision techniques.
5. To create career pathways for paraeducators.²

K-12 Project PreP: Objective 1

- To align curriculum of the existing paraeducator pre-service programs in the Colorado Community College system to national standards.
 - Common Core Professional Development Standards for Paraeducators in Special Education recently revised by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).
- Established and convened an Expert Panel (EP)
 - National and local paraprofessional and special education experts.
 - Special and General Education faculty from community colleges
 - Project staff

CEC Comment Core Professional development standards for Special Education Paraeducators

× Follow the same 10 basic categories as for CEC teacher standards

1. Foundations
2. Development and Characteristics of Learners
3. Individual Learning Differences
4. Instructional strategies
5. Language
6. Learning Environments / Social Interactions
7. Instructional Planning
8. Assessment
9. Professional and Ethical practice
10. Collaboration

Each standard consists of knowledge statements and skills statements

Development of Syllabus Review Matrix

- All syllabi were reviewed for content, coherency and comprehensiveness across each CEC knowledge and skill standard.
- Typical syllabi components (i.e. course objectives, syllabus, readings, assignments, quizzes, assessments) were reviewed.
- A rating code noted the level to which the knowledge and skill components under each standard were addressed across different components of the syllabus

I = Basic introduction of content in this course

K = Comprehensive knowledge based in this course

A = Demonstration of competency assessed in this course

NA= Not Addressed

Standard 1: Foundations	Knowledge	Course Objective (Yes or No)	Current Syllabus (I – K – A)	Readings (Student) (I – K – A)	Assignments/ Activity/ Performance (Student) (I – K – A)	Name of Artifacts /Document Evidence of Standard	Additional Comments/ Additional Information from the instructor
P1K1	Purposes of supports and services for individuals with exceptionalities						
P1K2	Rights and responsibilities of individuals with exceptionalities, and other stakeholders related to exceptionalities						
P1K3	Eligibility categories for special education and supports and services typically associated with each category						
P1K4	Impact of culture on shaping schools and the contributions of culturally diverse groups						
P1K5	Role of families in the educational process						
Skills							
P1S1	Use basic educational terminology to complete assigned tasks						
P1S2	Implement concepts associated with disability rights, normalization, and inclusive practices						
P1S3	Demonstrate respect and appreciation for differences in values, languages, and customs among home, school, and community						
P1S4	Access credible resources to extend and expand understanding of exceptionalities						

Syllabus Review
Template: Standard
#1: Foundations

Other Criteria.....

The presence or absence of the following artifacts/ documents and the extent these addressed knowledge and or skills component of standards was reviewed:

- **Text**
- **Assignments**
- **Handouts**
- **PowerPoint**
- **Product Guide**
- **Rubric**
- **Lecture notes**

- **Schedule**
- **Quiz / Exams**
- **Reflection Papers**
- **Journals**
- **Written Reports**
- **Demonstrations (Role Play and Practice)**

Review Process

- Four expert panel members took lead in analyzing six courses:
 - Worked in pairs of two
 - Each pair was assigned three courses
 - Complete the matrix for each course - **collaboratively** discussed points of clarification, negotiated and came to agreement.
- Community college faculty and key project staff provided supports for the review (e.g.. requests for additional materials, texts, conversations with individual instructors, compiling information in the matrix etc.)

Review Process.....

- Combined Matrix with analysis for each course into one final matrix
- Identified gaps and overlaps between knowledge and skills under 10 standards and the curriculum
- Recommended revisions/enhancement of existing courses and inclusion of additional coursework if necessary
- Currently, incorporating all recommendations and ensuring that syllabi have the necessary components as well as all standards are addressed across the courses

Issues Encountered and Overcome

- Syllabus analysis informed close scrutiny of wording in standards.
- Feedback regarding wording was shared with CEC standards committee members and resulted in revisions.
- Significant time spent clarifying the distinctions between "knowledge" and "skills" among the reviewers.
 - Agreement: "Skills" category included proficiencies that we needed to see exhibited/demonstrated.
- The column of reading was challenging to rate as explicit listing of all readings was often times not provided.
- Some syllabi lacked detail- more information obtained through conversation with the course instructors and examination of texts.

Next steps

- Creation of a consistent, cross institution syllabus template.
- Lead faculty are currently revising syllabi.
- Prioritized professional development needs are being informed through the syllabi revision process.

Contact Information....

Denise Uitto

duitto@uakron.edu

Donna Sobel

donna.sobel@ucdenver.edu

Ritu Chopra

ritu.chorpa@ucdenver.edu