Improving Teacher Preparation Grant

Request for Applications

2013-2015
Funding for this opportunity is has been made available by the Texas Education Agency. Project funding is ultimately dependent on the successful transfer of funds from TEA to the Children’s Learning Institute.

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Background and purpose
Improving the quality of teacher preparation programs is a national concern that must be addressed to ensure that children with diverse needs acquire the skills necessary to succeed in an economy that increasingly requires highly educated workers. The proposed project focuses specifically on the preparation of early childhood teachers. In the state of Texas, reforms aimed at improving these programs must be attuned to the needs of students seeking employment in public schools and in an array of private child care programs. While most public school programs require a four year degree, many teachers working in private care settings are trained in two year colleges. Separate training avenues for public versus private preschool settings leads to poorly aligned and fragmented systems. Research shows that qualified and well compensated professionals are necessary to ensure that early childhood programs prepare children for school readiness (Phillips, 2008). High quality early childhood education programs are essential to closing the achievement gap between children living in poverty and their more affluent peers (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips & Dawson, 2004; Henry, Gordon, Henderson & Ponder, 2003; King, 2006; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson & Mann, 2001; Schulman, 2005; Schulman & Barnett, 2005; Schweinhart, Montie, Xiang, Barnett, Belfield, & Nores, 2005).

Research suggests that a rigorous knowledge base about effective teacher preparation and professional development is needed. This knowledge base begins with a framework that pays attention to education, training, and support for teachers based on their understanding of young children and also includes the interactions between pre-service education, in-service professional development, and workplace environments to help teachers build and maintain best practices. The challenge is how to convey information to current teachers and prospective teachers who have widely varying educational backgrounds (Frede, Jung, Barnett, Lamy, & Figueras, 2007). Supporting the improvement in capacities and effectiveness of early childhood faculty is paramount to solving this problem. Historically, resources are too scarce
at the higher education level to invest in supporting faculty in this manner. This opportunity recognizes that fact and seeks to provide the resources and training needed bring about these desired changes. This funding opportunity seeks to support early childhood faculty higher education settings in better preparing future early childhood teachers for the workforce.

**Grant Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/30/2013</td>
<td>Improving Teacher Preparation Grant posted on CLI website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11/2013</td>
<td>Last day to submit FAQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11/2013</td>
<td>Due date for Intent to Apply to CLI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15/2013</td>
<td>Applicant webinar 1:00 PM CST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://uthconnect.uth.tmc.edu/itp">https://uthconnect.uth.tmc.edu/itp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-866-394-4146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Code: 492 347 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/16/2013</td>
<td>FAQs posted to CLI Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22/2013</td>
<td>Applicant Consultations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15/2013</td>
<td>Application due to CLI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/22/2013</td>
<td>Grantees announced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/01/2013</td>
<td>Project begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2014</td>
<td>Participating faculty attend spring training sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer-2014-August 2015</td>
<td>Project components are implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>Sustainability plan is finalized and submitted to CLI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Application Due Date**

To be eligible to be considered for funding, four complete copies of the application must be received at the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI), on or before 5:00 PM central standard time, **November 15, 2013** according to the application submission procedures. Applications and all required supporting documents not received by the deadline time and date are ineligible for review and will be returned to the applicant. In establishing the time and date of receipt, CLI will rely solely on the time/date stamp of CLI.
Send applications to:

Don Titcombe
7000 Fannin, Suite 1920-D
Houston, Texas 77030

Project Period
The entire project will begin no earlier than 12/1/2013 and will conclude no later than August 31, 2015. Obligation of funds for activities and services conducted shall occur within these dates. The second year of funding will be contingent on completion of year one requirements and available funding.

All goods must be received and all services must be provided or delivered in time to substantially benefit the population being served in the current grant period and in no case after the ending date of the grant.

If a grantee is identified as high-risk by CLI during the grant period, CLI reserves the right to immediately begin procedures to terminate the grant. The grantee will be reimbursed for allowable expenditures up through the date of notification of high-risk status.

Eligible Applicants
Each eligible grantee may submit only one application. For information regarding funding, see the Selection of Competitive Applications for Funding section. The following eligibility requirements also apply:

- Applicants must be an institution of higher education with coursework in field of child development or early education.
- Applicants must be able to provide early childhood educational practicum/laboratory experiences that can be arranged so that students participating are given opportunities to practice methodologies and instruction learned during coursework. The practicums can occur in an on-campus laboratory setting or in community-based prekindergarten, child care, or Head Start Settings.
- Applicants must appoint or designate a faculty sponsor, who will ensure the project is implemented properly and completed on time.
- Applicants must be willing to grant their faculty time and resources to participate in CLI-lead trainings and administrative requirements and tasks.
Applicants must have working articulation agreements in place between 2 year and 4 year institutions of higher education that facilitate the transfer of college credit among the institutions in a seamless manner.

CLI reserves the right not to award a grant to any institution that is identified by CLI as a high-risk grantee.

CLI recognizes the complexity involved in this offering. To ensure all applicants submit the most successful application possible for this opportunity, CLI will host an in-depth pre-application conference via webinar that will allow potential applicants to test out ideas and listen to different approaches.

**Notice of Intent to Apply**

Applicants are requested to submit their Notice of Intent to Apply by Wednesday, October 11, 2013. Notice of Intent should be sent to Donald.A.Titcombe@uth.tmc.edu and include the following:

Subject: Notice of Intent to Apply ITP

Body of email:

- Name of Organization
- Name of Contact
- Email of Contact
- Phone Number of Contact

**Applicant Webinars**

Prospective applicants will be provided an opportunity to receive general clarifying information from CLI about the scope of this RFA. This applicant webinar will be the single opportunity, in a group setting, to receive clarifying information from CLI personnel to assist potential applicants in understanding of the scope and nature of the work required in this application. The webinar will be open to all potential applicants.

The second half of the webinar will serve to assist all potential applicants with considering various scenarios for creating their applications. CLI will discuss various possible application models that participants will be able to consider and ask questions about.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Webinar</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Call Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 15, 2013</td>
<td>1:00 PM – 3:00 PM</td>
<td><a href="https://uthconnect.uth.tmc.edu/itp">https://uthconnect.uth.tmc.edu/itp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-866-394-4146</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Code: 492 347 191</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Please try link 30 mins before event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to download any needed software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions relevant to the RFA may only be sent in writing via email to the CLI funding manager: Donald.A.Titcombe@uth.tmc.edu. These questions, along with other information, will be addressed in the presentation. Questions that applicants wish to have addressed during the Applicants’ Webinar must be submitted no later than October 11, 2013.

**Requests for Clarifying Information**

To assure that no prospective applicant may obtain a competitive advantage because of acquisition of information unknown to other prospective applicants, any and all questions about the RFA must be submitted in writing to the CLI contact person, Donald Titcombe at Donald.A.Titcombe@uth.tmc.edu.

**Grant Goals and Project Components**

The Improving Teacher Preparation grant has four main goals:

1. Increase the knowledge and application of the current early childhood research base and effective pedagogical practices among faculty and staff of institutions of higher education that prepare future early childhood teachers.
2. Provide aspiring early childhood teachers with high quality training in various domains of early childhood development through the use of multiple methods supported by recent research. This includes practices in early childhood that support school readiness, such as consistently scheduled mentoring using classroom based observation and feedback tools, and video reflection and critique, among other practices.
3. To support the development and sustainability of articulation agreements between institutions providing coursework in early childhood or child development: including high schools, two year higher education institutions, and four year higher education institutions.
4. To encourage the development of sustainability plans and measures to continue to improve higher education’s preparation of teachers for early childhood classrooms. The grant will take place in three major phases. During phase 1, grantees will work to secure agreements with local high schools, such that local high schools are able to offer college credit for coursework in early childhood development. Grantees will work with designated high school teachers to supplement current coursework with eCIRCLE, and identify a high school teacher to facilitate these courses. During phase 2, participating programs will send selected faculty and high school teachers to CLI for a two-day training session to explore the current research base and proven methodologies for preparing teachers for the early childhood classroom. In addition, participating faculty will continue to engage with CLI through a series of online webinars throughout the remainder of the grant. Phase 3 will consist of faculty implementing their newly acquired knowledge/approaches with their higher education students, and high school teachers implementing supplemented courses in child development. Phase 3 will begin in the summer of 2014 for faculty and fall of 2014 for high school teachers and continue until the end of the summer semester in 2015.

Selected participants are committing to transforming the practice of preparing early childhood teachers for the classroom. The methods though which this transformation will be accomplished include engaging and training faculty, establishing supplemented child development courses in high schools, and implementing improved instructional methods and experiences for future early childhood teachers. Participating high school teachers and college faculty will receive stipends for participation in this program.

Specifically, selected grantees commit to the following:

1. **Maintaining articulation agreements:** All grantees must have working articulation agreements in place between 2 year and 4 year institutions of higher education that facilitate the transfer of college credit among the institutions in a seamless manner. Grantees are also encouraged to extend these agreements to local high schools, so that high school students can earn college credits in early childhood subjects.

   a. **Articulation agreements must include the following**
      i. Descriptions of the type of degree track, course description, and course numbers for college credits within a degree program and the number of credits.
      ii. At a minimum the articulation agreements must facilitate the transfer of at least 6 credit hours between 2 and 4 year institutions.
In addition to articulation agreements between 2 and 4 year institutions of higher education, grantees are expected to engage local high schools in an effort to establish courses in early childhood at the high school level that offer college credit to participating high school students. Grantees should consider creating agreements between themselves and high schools to supplement coursework in various high school classes so that college credit can be acquired by the high school students in early childhood subject areas. For example, high schools could supplement an existing child development elective with eCIRCLE courses. High schools and higher education institutions could also work together to bring college level lectures to the high school classroom, through online means.

2. **Professional Development for faculty and staff:** All grantees must contribute at least 1 full-time faculty or staff to receive ongoing professional development in the current early childhood research base and effective pedagogical practices. The commitment will be equivalent to approximately 5 days of training. Two of these days will take place in the spring of 2014 at CLI, while the remaining time commitment will be fulfilled over the course of the entire grant through a series of webinars with CLI staff. Each faculty member will join a community of practice that CLI will host (e.g., collaborative review of record faculty-student interactions).

3. **Ground coursework in early childhood competencies:** Grantees must supplement current coursework with additional training opportunities that are inclusive of the current research base in early childhood. Grantees must incorporate at least 6 courses from eCIRCLE [eCIRCLE includes 17 courses] into current higher education coursework (see eCIRCLE course descriptions). For those who are not familiar with eCIRCLE, guest access to the system will be granted upon declaring intent to apply.
   a. Grantees are encouraged to investigate new ways of providing early childhood coursework. For instance, lectures could be pre-recorded and assigned as homework in order to utilize classroom time for group analysis and discussion of early childhood videos focused on important teacher-child interactions or instructional practices (flipping the classroom).

4. **Transforming teacher preparation practices:** Based on knowledge gained though faculty professional development and work with CLI staff, grantees are expected to implement transformational practices in their preparation of future early childhood teachers. These practices must include, but are not limited to:
   a. Increasing the role of practicum and direct observation in the education and evaluation of future teachers. Grantees must utilize practicum more robustly in the training and evaluating of higher education students. CLI will train grantees
in current techniques like how to use observation and data driven metrics to assess performance.

b. Grantees must implement on-site or remote coaching/mentoring with future teachers during their practicum and/or coursework, and incorporate performance into student evaluations.

c. Utilizing recorded practice reflection and feedback. Grantees must implement methods to record early childhood classroom experiences and utilize them as an instructional tool or incorporate them into class evaluations.

As an example, applicants could consider supplementing TECA 1311 with onsite coaching experiences or recorded practice for reflection sessions. Further, applicants could consider supplementing TECA 1354 with opportunities to observe early childhood classrooms or review videos that illuminate developmental concepts. These are to serve as suggestions only; applicants are encouraged to present dynamic plans that describe how they will transform teacher preparation practices.

5. **Reporting data to CLI.** Grantees are expected to complete a spreadsheet that includes information on the programs where students are completing their practicum, as well as any other required reporting.

6. **Developing a sustainability plan:** All grantees will submit a brief sustainability plan evaluating the success of the implemented strategies and any plans to continue the strategies after the grant expires.

**Performance Measures and Program Evaluation**

In the application, applicants are required to describe an evaluation plan/design for monitoring the implementation of the program on an on-going basis and for determining whether the program met its stated goals and objectives and achieved the desired results based on the established performance indicators. By submitting this application, the applicant agrees to comply with any reporting and evaluation requirements that may be established by CLI. CLI will collect and analyze data where possible.

The Children’s Learning Institute will ensure the project’s success by:

- Providing project management support, including:
  - Monitoring/feedback sessions via conference calls
  - Site Visits
- Fiscal support, including:
  - Faculty Student Advisor stipend - $7,000/year
  - High School Teacher stipend - $1,250/year
- Reimbursement of office supplies - $500/year
- Reimbursement of mentor mileage - up to $2000/year. Mileage is based on the state mileage reimbursement rate, currently $.565/mile.

- Ongoing training and technical assistance:
  - Two-day, on-site training at CLI
  - On-going webinars and remote training events

- Materials to improve practicum experience:
  - CLI will provide each faculty student advisor with a toolkit of materials and aides for practicum learning – $2,500
  - CLI will provide each faculty student advisor with critical technology supports - $1,000

**NOTE:** Stipend and reimbursement funds will be disbursed directly to faculty and teachers.

**Application format and scoring criteria**

Each competitive application is reviewed to determine the capability of the applicant to implement its proposed program. In reviewing the information submitted and in recommending competitive applications for funding, the review committee and CLI staff consider the following criteria, and award up to the following maximum points for each criterion. Below is the application outline, with priorities for each section, and maximum scores. Applicants should follow the outline below in submitting their application. Please keep applications at or under 50 pages in length.

**Introduction (5 points)**

- Include a description of the magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the Improving Teach Preparation project.
- Provide a summary of why the applicant is qualified to carry out the project successfully.
- Summarize the applicant’s plan for the project.

**Articulation Agreements (20 points)**

- Reference any articulation agreements the applicant has in place with higher education institutions.
- Explain the applicant’s plan for engaging high schools toward the goal of creating courses in early childhood subjects at the high school level that earn college credit for participating high school students.
- Include copies of the agreements in the Communication, Reporting, and Documentation section.
Personnel (10 points)

- Provide descriptions in the application of faculty that will work on the project, and of any high school teachers have already been identified.
- Describe why these faculty (and high school teachers) were selected for this project.
- Include copies of relevant resumes in the Communication, Reporting, and Documentation section.

Coursework (20 points)

- Provide a plan for supplementing current coursework with additional training opportunities that are aligned with or inclusive of the current early childhood research base.
- Include any commitment to new ways to deliver current coursework in more effective or innovative ways.
- Explain how the applicant will incorporate eCIRCLE into current coursework at the college levels. Any plans already made to incorporate eCIRCLE into coursework at the high school level should also be included.

Transforming teacher preparation practices: (20 points)

- Provide a plan and commitment to implementing the following practices:
  - Increasing the role of practicum and direct observation in the education and evaluation of future teachers.
  - Increasing the role of onsite or remote coaching/mentoring in preparing future teachers – strong applications will prioritize remote coaching as a part of their teacher preparation practices
  - Utilizing recorded practice reflection and feedback.

*note CLI will provide in depth training in these techniques to faculty. Applicants should make clear in their applications their explanations of their plans to include these techniques, not necessarily their current expertise in these areas.

Sustainability plan: (10 points)

- Provide assurances that the applicant is committed to transforming teacher preparation practices
- Provide the evaluation plan for monitoring the implementation of the program on an ongoing basis and for determining whether the program met its stated goals and objectives and achieved the desired results
Communications, reporting, and documentation (10 points)

- Provide assurance that the applicant will comply with required project communications and reporting
- Include all MOUs, LOAs, Resumes/CVs
- Include assurance that venues of practicum meet safety and ethical standards of the college or university

Budget and Budget Narrative (5 points)

- Provide a project budget and explanation of each line item, based on budget guidance provided

Sample Budget – Below is a summary of potential budget items applicants may want to consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty stipend</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
<td>Applicants may propose funding for multiple Faculty Student Advisors if they can support a minimum of 20 students each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school teacher stipend</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>High school teachers will attend CLI trainings and work with faculty to develop courses in early childhood subjects at the high school level that will provide college credit to participating high school students. Applicants may propose funding for multiple high school teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum materials</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>CLI will make a higher education kit for grantees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel reimbursement</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>Reimbursements will not be provided as part of the award, but will be given as travel occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative materials</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$500 per year is the maximum available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and high school teacher travel to Houston for training</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology procurements (Cameras for remote coaching, web cams for students)</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>Faculty may need webcams for remote coaching, and portable cameras.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mileage</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>Mileage will be reimbursed to faculty, up to $2,000 per year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
<td></td>
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Selection of Competitive Applications for Funding

Awards for competitive grants are considered on the basis of total points. Awards are contingent upon availability of funds. Only applications receiving 70 will be considered for IHE grant funding. Grant awards are made starting with the highest-scoring application and continue to the next highest score until funds are exhausted or until the applications with the minimum percentage score or higher are funded, whichever is the case.

It is important that a diversity of students, children, and areas across the state be represented in the operation of these programs. Therefore, after all applications have received a final score (usually from 0 to 100), additional factors will be considered before selection of the programs recommended for funding.

In general, sites are selected to establish programs that accomplish the following:

- May be replicable in areas with similar demographics.
- Are diverse with respect to size of area served (i.e., small, medium, and large enrollment).
- Are diverse with respect to geographic location in Texas (i.e., quadrant of the state).
- Demonstrate greatest need.
- Meet any additional criteria identified in Application Guidelines.

To ensure applications most advantageous to the project are selected for funding, the order in which applications are ranked may be changed to fund projects that represent a greater diversity of students and geographic areas in the operation of these programs.

To be considered for funding for competitive grants and continuation grants that have previously received funding from CLI, applicants must have a positive record that includes being in compliance with all requirements and conditions of those grants, including financial management requirements, and implementing the grant programs according to the timelines and descriptions proposed in the grant applications.

Application Funding

Ultimate funding levels will be determined through correspondence between winning applicants and CLI staff. Winners may be asked to make changes to their plans in order to accommodate the best use of overall funds. CLI staff will contact winners and work with them to determine the final scope and budget of their project. CLI reserves the right to reduce funding if projections are determined not to have been realistic based on actual participation.
Should additional funds become available for distribution, CLI staff will determine how these are to be distributed.

Project funding in subsequent project periods will be based on satisfactory progress of the first-period objectives and activities, and on general budget approval by the Commissioner of Education and appropriations by the State Legislature.

**Subsequent Year Funding**
The Improving Teacher Preparation Grant operates on a 2-year cycle. Continuation applications will be funded for no more than the amount of the previous funding period and will be based on annual accomplishment of grant objectives and requirements. All subsequent year funding is contingent upon appropriations by the State Legislature and on approval of the Commissioner of Education. CLI reserves the right to reduce funding if projections are determined not to have been realistic based on actual participation.

**Required Reports**

**Report Due Dates**
By submitting the application, the applicant agrees to comply with any reporting and evaluation requirements that may be established by CLI and to submit the reports in the format requested by CLI.

**Reimbursement Procedures and Expenditure Audit Reports**
Unless otherwise specified, grantees in good standing are required to request payment through monthly invoices to CLI. The final invoice must be filed within 30 days after the ending date of the grant. Failure to meet invoicing deadlines may result in loss of funds and could cause the grantee to be identified as “high risk.”

Final payment is contingent upon receipt of all required programmatic and financial reports and documents. CLI reserves the right to withhold a portion of the final payment pending receipt of the required reports. The total project cumulative costs of the grant should equal but in no case may exceed the total cumulative expenditures reported.

Any expenditure reports received after September 30, 2015 will not be paid by CLI and the grantee will be responsible for those expenditures.
eCIRCLE - Module Descriptions

Title of Course: Developing Children’s Cognitive Readiness in Literacy and Math

Instructor(s):

Description of Courses:

The eCIRCLE courses were developed by the State Center for Early Childhood Development at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. The courses are designed to develop teachers’ teaching strategies and understanding of cognitive skills that will help them create and maintain a well-managed pre-kindergarten classroom that is filled with quality classroom instruction.

This course includes:

- Video segments.
- Activities to help you review the course materials as well as projects you can implement in your classroom.
- Prompts for reflecting, discussing, and sharing ideas with other course participants. (Note: This course features an online discussion component titled Share Ideas. You should visit your learning group’s discussion area at least a few times a week to keep the conversation going and the ideas flowing.)

Prerequisites:

This course is intended for students or teachers who are in search of expanding their knowledge of how to increase children’s cognitive readiness and prepare children for kindergarten.

Course Text:

e-CIRCLE online courses

Required Materials:

1. Computer
2. High-speed internet connection
3. Quick time flash
4. Access to professional development platform (license required)
Course Objectives:

Students will develop an understanding of the following below:

Classroom Management

This module focuses on designing, creating, and managing classrooms that combine meaningful structure with responsiveness. In such classroom environments, children begin to love learning, to manage their own behavior, and to work and play independently.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain classroom management, including:
   a. Defining what classroom management is, breaking it down into its elements, and articulating its importance.
   b. Prioritizing the essential physical elements of a well-managed classroom.
   c. Recognizing classroom management’s key social and emotional components.

2. Plan and design your classroom from the ground up, including:
   a. Working creatively and resourcefully around limited budgets to create a dynamic and well-stocked classroom.
   b. Creating spaces that are conducive to focused learning, smooth transitions, behavior management, and instilling a sense of wonder in children.
   c. Creating and managing independent working areas for small clusters of children (i.e., centers).
   d. Building an understanding of how good classroom management can minimize the need for extensive behavior management.

3. Begin to develop a personal, thorough classroom management practice, including:
   a. Establishing relevant rules and routines.
   b. Developing supportive structures.
   c. Building centers that are engaging AND educational.
   d. Learning to balance direct instruction with indirect instruction in a way that enables children to work independently, to manage and guide each other and themselves.
   e. Learning to create smooth transitions from one activity to another.
   f. Learning to handle conflict in a way that respects children allows them to keep their dignity and prevents future conflict.
Read Alouds

This course focuses on planning and leading effective read alouds for pre-kindergarten children. It includes research-based techniques for extending the benefits of read alouds throughout the school day and week, presents read alouds as a cornerstone of children’s literacy, and explains the fundamental role of read alouds in fostering positive, lifelong, relationships between children and the written word.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain and discuss the theory behind read alouds, including:
   a. The role of read alouds in language development.
   c. Classroom environments that support read alouds (small groups vs. large groups, time of day, etc.)

2. Understand the structure of read alouds, including:
   a. Specific teaching techniques to be used before, during, and after read alouds.
   b. Teacher behaviors that influence effectiveness, such as:
      i. Pacing
      ii. Interest- and excitement-building techniques
      iii. Character development
      iv. Expectations setting
      v. Informal assessments

3. Plan effective read alouds by:
   a. Setting learning objectives and goals based on children’s specific needs and learning styles.
   b. Making purposeful and thoughtful book selections based on various criteria (e.g., child assessments, themes, content, and center activities).
   c. Implementing teacher behaviors that support children’s success.

4. Informally assess student progress during read alouds.
5. Lead center activities that build on read aloud lessons.
6. Actively reflect on read alouds and related activities conducted throughout the instructional day and week.
Letter Knowledge

This module focuses on strategies for introducing pre-K children to letter and language concepts while exposing them to the letters themselves (letters from both English and Spanish language). Such letter knowledge instruction sets the stage for rich, meaningful, and enjoyable relationships between young children and the building blocks of our written language.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain and discuss the importance of letter knowledge.
   a. Describe how letter knowledge contributes to children’s broader literacy development.
   b. Define the importance of environmental print and print awareness in children’s development of letter knowledge.
   c. Understand the role that letter knowledge (including both letter recognition and understanding the concept of letters) plays in early literacy.

2. Plan and implement dynamic and comprehension letter knowledge instruction in both languages.
   a. Understand, design, and create print-rich learning environments.
   b. Set letter knowledge learning objectives specific to and appropriate for each child.
   c. Plan activities, for large groups and small groups, in centers and in transition times, which build letter knowledge throughout the school day and across language systems.
   d. Introduce letters and the alphabet in English and Spanish in authentic contexts with opportunities for hands-on exploration.
   e. Expose children to both lowercase and uppercase letter equivalence.

3. Follow and foster children’s letter knowledge and development.
   a. Assess both your teaching and your children’s learning formally and informally throughout the school day.
   b. Observe, reflect, and record your assessments and observations.
   c. Adapt your instruction based on your children’s development, needs and learning styles.

4. Actively reflect, independently and with colleagues, on your letter knowledge instruction and related activities conducted throughout the instructional day and week.
Setting the Stages for Children’s Talk

This module focuses on the key elements of encouraging and scaffolding children’s talk in English and Spanish in pre-K classrooms: responsiveness, rich content and stimulation, and emotional support.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain and discuss the importance of encouraging children’s talk in both languages.
   a. Describe the relationship between children’s talk and other systems of language development.
   b. Describe the kinds of classroom environments that encourage meaningful talk.
   c. Understand the role that talk and conversation play in early literacy.
   d. Describe the way in which children’s talk contributes to children’s cognitive, social, and emotional development.
   e. Understand the classroom environment and the talk that occurs within the classroom as evolutionary and dynamic.

2. Plan, create, and maintain a classroom environment which supports, scaffolds, and encourages children’s talk in both languages.
   a. Set oral language development objectives specific to and appropriate for each child.
   b. Plan activities and set routines across the school day and across language systems which give children the opportunity to talk (to adults in the classroom and to each other).
   c. Provide children with a variety of props, puppets and toys to engage with in pretend play.
   d. Create an emotionally supportive, warm classroom environment in which children are comfortable talking.
   e. Respond to children’s interests and questions as they arise without losing sight of the day’s planned activities and learning objectives.

3. Assess, observe, and thoughtfully consider children’s talk and oral language development in both languages.
   a. Assess both your teaching practices and your children’s oral language development formally and informally throughout the school day.
   b. Observe, reflect, and record your assessments and observations.
   c. Adapt your classroom environment and your instruction based on your children’s characters, development, needs, and learning styles.

4. Actively reflect, independently and with colleagues, on your classroom as an environment which supports and encourages meaningful talk throughout the school day, week, and year in both languages.
Written Expression

This module focuses on planning, implementing, and reflecting on written expression instruction in pre-K classrooms, including modeling, encouraging, and scaffolding writing across the school day and throughout the school year.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain and discuss the importance of written expression.
   a. Describe how written expression contributes to children’s broader language development.
   b. Define the importance of environmental print and print awareness in children’s written expression and emergent writing (including both children’s writing/drawing and their understanding of the purpose of written words) play in early literacy development.
   c. Model both the purpose and process of writing for children across the school day.

2. Plan and implement dynamic, comprehensive, and integrated instruction that supports children’s written expression in both languages.
   a. Understand, design, and create print-rich learning environments that demonstrate and model the various uses of writing.
   b. Integrate opportunities for writing into every aspect of the school day, in English and Spanish, from centers, to circle to transition times.
   c. Give children the opportunity to write about real-life experiences and to write within meaningful contexts.
   d. Expose children to a wide variety of writing tools, materials, and activities that help them develop fine motor skills.
   e. Scaffold children’s understanding of the importance of writing by clarifying the relationship between written and spoken words and by exposing them to scenarios within which writing is modeled as an effective means of communication.

3. Follow and foster children’s written expression development.
   a. Assess your children’s written expression development formally and informally throughout the school day.
   b. Observe, reflect, and record your assessments and observations.
   c. Adapt your instruction based on your children’s development, needs, and learning styles.
   d. Set goals for written expression that are specific to and appropriate for each child.

4. Actively reflect, independently and with colleagues, on the ways in which you support written expression, in both languages, in your classroom.
Math

This module presents strategies and rationale for supporting mathematics development in early childhood classrooms.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain why it is important to support mathematics development in early childhood classrooms.
2. Identify the main mathematics content areas and process skills to support in early childhood.
3. Plan your objectives and be purposeful in meeting them while ensuring a playful manner in your teaching.
4. Design a focused mathematics lesson for a small group of children.
   a. Set developmentally appropriate mathematics learning objectives for your children that will be both fun and effective.
   b. Plan a mathematics lesson to help your children with these objectives.
   c. Set up an appropriate group structure and provide necessary materials for the lesson.
   d. Implement the lesson.
   e. Assess the children’s understanding and the lesson’s effectiveness.
   f. Reflect on the lesson and plan follow-up lessons.
5. Weave mathematical content into regular daily activities such as transitions, circle time, snack time, story time, center time, and playtime, as springboards for mathematics concept development.
6. Identify and provide a variety of manipulatives for mathematics exploration and help children reflect on their explorations with these manipulatives.
7. Seek out additional curricular materials and resources to support deep and sustained mathematics development in your classroom.
8. Learn about the two types of assessment that are powerful tools for individualizing instruction and practice developing your own informal assessments.
Phonological Awareness

This module features four-year-olds engaged in playful activities with a purpose. The teachers focus on exposing the children repeatedly to the sounds of spoken words in English and Spanish.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain phonological awareness, including:
   a. Articulating what it is and why it is important.
   b. Explaining how it is different from phonics and memorizing.
   c. Explaining the steps in the Phonological Awareness Continuum.

2. Implement teaching strategies that help children develop phonological awareness, including:
   a. Focusing children’s attention on listening, words in a sentence, syllables in words, onset-rimes, rhyming, alliteration, and individual phonemes.
   b. Implementing strategies throughout the day, during transitions, read alouds, center times, beginning of the day sessions, and end of the day sessions.
   c. Using specific tools to develop elements of phonological awareness (such as books, pipes, bathtubs, paper bags, and mirrors).
   d. Facilitating phonological awareness instruction in both languages.

3. Assess ALL children both formally and informally in English and Spanish, including:
   a. Devising strategies to help children who are struggling to hear the sounds in words.
   b. Challenging children who are learning quickly.
   c. Adapting your instruction based on what you learn.

4. Support children’s development of phonological awareness in ways that:
   a. Stimulate and challenge but do not overwhelm the child.
   b. Balance the need for direct instruction and child-centered activities (indirect instruction).
   c. Progress from modeling, to guiding, and then to encouraging students to do tasks independently.
Building Vocabulary

This module focuses on developing and enhancing theme-based vocabulary instruction for pre-kindergarten children. It includes techniques in English and Spanish for introducing children to new vocabulary, creating a language-rich environment, and setting the stage for broad language development and early literacy.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain and discuss the importance of vocabulary development for ALL children in pre-kindergarten.
2. Plan and implement in English and Spanish a comprehensive, theme-based vocabulary instruction.
   a. Choose rich themes in English and Spanish that introduce the children to a whole range of new vocabulary words, specifically “root words” and “rare words.”
   b. Identify at least 25 to 30 new words in English and Spanish each week, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
   c. Create a vocabulary–rich and print-rich classroom environment in both languages.
   d. Provide repeated exposure to vocabulary words by incorporating vocabulary words and instruction into activities throughout the day (in read alouds, center activities, circle time, etc.)
   e. Provide a variety of planful, playful, and purposeful activities, in both languages, within which children can build a context for new vocabulary words through various multisensory experiences (e.g., touch, hear, see, physical movement/role play, etc.)
   f. Link vocabulary words and activities to one central theme, so that new vocabulary words are frequently referenced and children recognize the thread that connects them.
   g. Recognize that children who are English language learners (ELLs) or children with special needs may not acquire vocabulary at the same pace.
3. Follow and foster individual children’s vocabulary development.
   a. Assess children, both formally and informally, to see whether they are learning, developing, and retaining new vocabulary over time.
   b. Adapt instruction if children’s vocabulary goals aren’t being met.
4. Actively reflect on the effectiveness of both the vocabulary instruction and the related activities conducted throughout the day and week.
Social and Emotional Learning

This module focuses on pre-kindergarten Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). It includes evidence-based instructional practices that support the development of important skills—skills that help young children as they establish a sense of self and begin to forge relationships with peers.

Implementation of SEL strategies in pre-kindergarten situations contributes not only to children’s current well-being, but also to their later achievements. Preschool children with strong social skills and emotional self-regulation are more likely to enjoy success both interpersonally and academically in their future schooling experiences.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Discuss why social and emotional development are important in early childhood education
2. Share descriptors of the current level of social emotional development and expectations for growth for children in an early childhood classroom for each of the four domains of social and emotional learning (self-concept, self-control, social competence, and social awareness)
3. List instructional best practices to promote the social and emotional development of all children in the early education classroom in each of the four domains of social and emotional learning
Understanding Special Needs

This course focuses on understanding and supporting special needs children who struggle regulating their behavior and attention, social and emotional responses, and receptive and expressive language. This course is not intended to provide diagnostic tools to teachers, but rather to provide information about these children and the kinds of teaching strategies that can help them in the pre-kindergarten classroom.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify types of regulation difficulties and how these relate to common disorders diagnosed in early childhood
2. Gain a deeper understanding of some of the more common developmental challenges that children face in pre-kindergarten classrooms and the importance of early identification and treatment
3. Identify and implement effective teaching strategies to support children with regulation difficulties
4. Learn what steps to take when you have a concern about a child’s development
Discovering Early Childhood Science

This course presents research-based methods and tools to help teachers plan, teach, and assess children's understanding in pre-K science.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Explain the importance of teaching science in early childhood classrooms
2. Describe what science looks like at the preschool level and how young children learn science
3. Understand how science learning promotes language development
4. Use questioning to promote children’s learning and understanding about science
5. Design an engaging science learning environment
6. Facilitate both formal and informal science learning experiences

Pre-Kindergarten Response to Intervention

This course focuses on understanding Pre-kindergarten Response to Intervention (P-RTI). It includes evidence-based instructional practices that support school readiness by using a tiered model for providing instruction at increasing levels of intensity and measuring children’s response to instruction. P-RTI frameworks can enhance existing practices with clear decision-making criteria for evaluating instructional quality and the fit for each child.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Use a P-RTI framework in your classroom
2. Increase your use of data in instructional planning
3. Use provided resources to implement a tiered framework for supporting oral language skills, specifically listening comprehension and knowledge of target vocabulary
4. Consider additional resources to help you build a tiered framework to improve print-related skills, phonological awareness skills, and early math skills
English Language Learners: Culture, Language, Instruction

This course focuses on understanding and meeting the unique needs of pre-kindergarten (pre-K) English language learners (ELLs). It addresses the impact of culture on children's learning and oral language development, introduces the stages of language development and second language acquisition, and highlights evidence-based instructional strategies that teachers can use to support ELLs in their classrooms.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Appreciate and understand the unique learning and socio-emotional needs of early childhood ELLs
2. Recognize the skills and experiences that ELLs bring to the early childhood classroom
3. Know and apply effective practices for teaching ELLs in an early childhood setting
4. Describe the various programmatic approaches available for language-minority students in general and on your campus
5. Identify the oral language skills that children demonstrate at each developmental level

Effective Mentoring Strategies

This course introduces the key components of mentoring, as well as tools and effective strategies to help mentors support early childhood teachers in their work with children.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Identify key characteristics of effective mentors
2. Establish collegial partnerships with teachers and overcome common challenges to the mentoring relationship
3. Implement the three phases of the mentoring cycle (observe, set goals, and take action)
4. Use observation tools, such as the CEC and COT, to ensure the consistency, neutrality, and completeness of classroom observations
5. Use observational data to develop achievable goals for teachers
6. Conduct effective instructional planning sessions to improve teacher ability to align lesson plans with appropriate instructional expectations
7. Apply a variety of mentoring strategies as appropriate, including room arrangement support, modeling, side-by-side coaching, and co-teaching
8. Guide teachers in being self-reflective learners who continually seek to improve their practice
Leading School –Wide Improvement

This course presents research-based methods and tools to help pre-K center directors and school principals phase-in a program of instructional evaluation and support.

By the time students complete this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand the evaluation cycle and strategies for building trust
2. Recognize high-quality instruction
3. Select evaluation tools suited to your purpose
4. Record your observations during classroom instruction
5. Understand how to identify goals and write an action plan
6. Understand effective strategies for post-observation meetings
7. Develop your school-wide improvement plan using observation data

Course Requirements

Class attendance is required (80% of class sessions) in order to gain a clear understanding of the material at a depth necessary to do well on the examinations and to participate in class discussion. Please notify the facilitator in the event of an emergency. For the purpose of this class, attendance is defined as presence and participation in class discussion and activities. Class participation is defined as actively participating in discussions, groups, etc. by providing relevant questions and comments in class activities. Assigned readings are necessary to participate in class.