**Training Guide: Rubric for Assessing a Course Syllabus**

The Course Syllabus Rubric is designed to guide the review and documentation of key content and areas of knowledge/practice that are important to consider when preparing professionals to support each and every child and family. The content areas may be found throughout the syllabus\* or in one specific section.

**THE RUBRIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

**❶** Read the rubric and become familiar with all the key terms.

**❷** Review the syllabus to get the general gist of the course. **Find** the following features in the syllabus:

* Course description
* Course outcomes or objectives
* Course materials (e.g., required and recommended readings, articles, websites, and other materials)
* Instructional experiences (e.g., a course calendar that lists topics or areas of emphasis, required observations, videos, guest speakers, lab experiences)
* Assignments (e.g., lists of required assignments, research or projects to be completed)

**❸** For each component of the syllabus, go through the following process.

Course Description: Read the course description. With the course description in front of you, scan the list of indicators. Which indicators did you see reflected in the course description? Place a small check mark or notation in the box beside each indicator that explicitly matches content in the course description.

Outcomes/Objectives: Repeat the process for the course description.

Texts, Readings, Resources: Repeat the process for the course description.

Course Content: Read all information related to how the course is taught. Look for information about the sequence of topics addressed, discussion topics, videos, reflection topics, etc. Look for matches between the instructional experiences described in the syllabus and the indicators. When you see a match, note it in the appropriate box with a small check mark. It can also be helpful to note the page number of the syllabus on which you saw the match. For example, if the syllabus mentions that there will be a guest speaker on planning for transitions from early intervention to preschool, you would put a check in box opposite Indicator 14 labelled knowledge acquisition. If the syllabus mentions that students need to reflect on what the speaker said and how it will impact their practices, you would put a check in both the box labelled knowledge acquisition AND the box labelled knowledge application.

Assignments: Read all information about the assignments, including directions, rubrics, and forms. Look for matches between the assignments described in the syllabus and the indicators. When you see a match, note it in the appropriate box with a small check mark. It can also be helpful to note the page number of the syllabus on which you saw the match. For example, if the syllabus mentions that students need to research evidence-based practices for supporting preschool children with disabilities to develop STEM concepts, you would put a check in boxes opposite Indicators 7 and 8 labelled knowledge acquisition. If the syllabus mentions that students need to use those evidence-based practices as the basis for designing a STEM learning center for all the children (with and without disabilities) in the preschool classroom, you would put checks for Indicators 7 and 8 in both the boxes labelled knowledge acquisition AND the boxes labelled knowledge application.

As you get familiar with using the rubric, you may find it helpful to make notes that would be useful when reflecting on ways in which to enhance the syllabus (e.g., if a specific activity or assignment could be easily tweaked to include application of knowledge as well as acquisition). It may also be helpful to note the page on which information is found.

**❹ Relevance**

* If the content of the indicator is not relevant to the content of the syllabus being reviewed, mark the item as NR. Do not include NR items in scoring.

5 Scoring

Identify the extent to which the syllabus reflects the indicators

When deciding on a rating, consider where and the extent to which indicators are reflected in the syllabus as a whole. To score the level of emphasis use the scoring system provided on the rubric:

* 1 = indicator is not mentioned
* 2 = indicator is mentioned once
* 3 = indicator is mentioned in a knowledge acquisition and/or knowledge application area
* 4 = indicator is mentioned in the basic syllabus components, instructional experiences, and knowledge acquisition and knowledge application areas
* 5 = indicator is mentioned consistently across all categories

If the content of the indicator is not relevant to the content of the syllabus being reviewed, mark the item as NR. Do not include NR items in scoring.

**KEY TERMS**

* **Knowledge acquisition** – Gaining knowledge and skills**1**
* **Knowledge application** – Using or applying knowledge in practice**1**
* **Progress monitoring** – *“A scientifically based practice that is used to assess students’ academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class*.**2**
* **Assistive tools and technology** – “*A range of strategies to promote a child's access to learning opportunities, from making simple changes to the environment and materials to helping a child use special equipment. Combining AT with effective teaching promotes the child's participation in learning and relating to others*.”**3**
* **STEM** – **S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**ath
* **Evidence-based practices** – Based on the best-available empirical evidence as well as the wisdom and experience of the field, evidence-based practices are those that are most likely to achieve positive outcomes and to help children achieve their highest potential. **4, 5**
* **Dual language learners** (**DLLs**) – “*Children who are DLLs are those who are learning two (or more) languages at the same time or learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language.”* **6**
* **Positive behavioral interventions** – A **framework** for maximizing the selection and use of a continuum of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices that supports the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of all students.**7**
* **Transition plans** – The document and process for the intentional set of activities that support communication between sending and receiving practitioners, engage families in collaborative planning, and support children’s, family’s, and professional’s preparation for and adjustment to a change in settings or programs.**8**

**REFERENCES**

**1** National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. (2008). *What do we mean by professional development in the early childhood field?* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, Author.

[**http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/sites/npdci.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/NPDCI\_ProfessionalDevelopmentInEC\_03-04-08\_0.pdf**](http://npdci.fpg.unc.edu/sites/npdci.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/NPDCI_ProfessionalDevelopmentInEC_03-04-08_0.pdf)

**2** National Center on Student Progress Monitoring [**http://www2.ku.edu/~crtiec/Presentations/OSEP%202008%20Progress%20monitoring%20carta%207-22%20without%20pics.pdf**](http://www2.ku.edu/~crtiec/Presentations/OSEP%202008%20Progress%20monitoring%20carta%207-22%20without%20pics.pdf)

**3** CONNECT Module 5: Assistive Technology[**http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-5**](http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-5)

**4** Buysse, V., & Wesley, P. W. (Eds.). (2006). *Evidence-based practice in the early childhood field*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three; Buysse, V., Wesley, P. W., Snyder, P., & Winton, P. (2006). Evidence-based practice: What does it really mean for the early childhood field? *Young Exceptional Children, 9* (4), 2-11.

5 DEC Recommended Practices [**https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/tgv6GUXhVo/**](https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/tgv6GUXhVo/)

6 Policy Statement on Supporting the Development of Children who are Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Programs (p.2). [**https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/dll-policy-statement-2016.pdf**](https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/dll-policy-statement-2016.pdf)

7 OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Supports [**https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners/pbis-faqs**](https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners/pbis-faqs)

**8** CONNECT Module 2: Transition[**http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-2**](http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/learners/module-2)

**SAMPLE SYLLABUS**

**Title:** Child Growth and Development

**Description:** This course covers theories of child development, developmental sequences, and factors that influence children’s development, from infancy through middle childhood for all children. Emphasis is placed on sequences in physical/motor, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development and the multiple influences on the development and learning of the whole child. Upon completion, students should be able to identify typical and atypical developmental characteristics, plan experiences to enhance development, and describe appropriate interaction techniques and environments.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Discuss ways in which trauma, stress, and maltreatment influences all children’s development and learning from preschool to middle childhood.
2. Identify theories, research, principles of child development, growth, and learning in all domains.
3. Describe stages of development, developmental milestones, and characteristic behaviors in all domains from conception to middle childhood.
4. Identify appropriate observation techniques for assessing developmental levels and skills of all children and using those data to inform decisions.
5. Plan developmentally appropriate experiences, interaction techniques and environments that are sensitive to and meet the individual needs of all children and families with differing backgrounds, i.e. linguistic, culture, geographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic.

**Textbook:** *Childhood and Adolescence Voyages in Development* by Spencer A. Rathus, Delmar Publishers

**Units of Instruction**

1. What Is Child Development?
   1. History, Theories, and Methods
2. Beginnings
   1. Heredity and Conception
   2. Prenatal Development
   3. Birth and the Newborn Baby: In the New World
3. Infancy
   1. Infancy: Physical Development
   2. Infancy: Cognitive Development
   3. Infancy: Social and Emotional Development
4. Toddlerhood
   1. Toddler Physical Development
   2. Toddler Social and Emotional Development
   3. Toddler Cognitive Development

**In Class Video Activity A:** *Babies*

Watch the film *Babies*. It will visually convey the ways in which adults support the development of four babies, Mari (Tokyo, Japan), Hattie (San Francisco, USA), Ponijao (Namibia), and Bayarjargal (Mongolia). As you watch the film, think about and be prepared to discuss the following questions: 1) What were the most striking similarities among these children and their experiences? 2) What were the most striking differences among these children and their experiences? To what extent do you see emphasis on language? Literacy? Social-emotional development? STEM development?

**Out of Class Assignments:**

**Assignment #1**: Journal Articles Summary

Read 10 professional journal articles relating to Infant Growth and Development.  These articles will be submitted with a typed paragraph for each article summarizing the key points and the link to the article online.

**Assignment #2: Beyond Babies**

Imagine this: You are a teacher in a high-quality childcare program. Ponijao’s family is about to relocate and he will be placed in your class. What will you do to ensure that you provide high-quality, culturally-responsive services and supports for Ponijao and his family? Drawing on your textbook, things we’ve discussed in class, and handouts you’ve received about evidence-based practices, write 2-3 paragraphs about each of the following topics.

* How will you engage, build respectful partnerships, and communicate with Ponijao’s family?
* How will you support Ponijao as a young dual language learner?
* How will you build Ponijao’s resilience in adapting to a completely new learning environment with new children and a new language of instruction?

At the end of each section, cite the source of the evidence-based practices from which you drew information.

**Assignment #3:** Child Rearing Practices in Other Cultures

Prepare a brief research paper investigating child-rearing situations in another country. Choose a country other than the United States. Focus your research on practices that impact social-emotional development.  
  
**Assignment #4**: Read All About It

For this assignment you will need to identify and read four articles on aspects of child growth and development.

* You have been provided with List A of early childhood journals (e.g., *Young Children*) and List B of early childhood special education/early intervention journals (e.g., *Young Exceptional Children, Exceptional Parent*). At least one of your articles must come from a journal in List B.
* The articles should address some aspect(s) of growth and development for children of different ages (e.g., infant, toddler, preschool, kindergarten, primary).
* There are five priority topics for this assignment.

1. Young children who have experienced trauma, maltreatment, or other adverse experiences
2. Young children with disabilities
3. Young children who are racially, ethnically, or culturally diverse
4. Young children with challenging behavior
5. Young children who are dual language learners (DLLs)

At least two of your articles must address one or more of the priority topics.

* For each article, please write the following.
  + Title, author, journal title, journal issue, pages (use APA style for this citation)
  + Priority topic(s) addressed
  + Identify one or more evidence-based practices that were mentioned in the article. Describe the practice(s).
  + Describe whether the practice was selected, implemented, evaluated, and adjusted in ways that are consistent with progress monitoring. If this did not occur, please comment on how you would have incorporated components of progress monitoring in using the practice(s).