



VCU

Partnership for People with Disabilities

Deana M. Buck, M.Ed., Kathleen Bodisch Lynch, Ph.D., Monica Uhl, M.A., Donna Gilles, Ed.D.

Creative Paraprofessional Collaborations: Integrating Evidence-Based Practices into Early Childhood Community College Curricula

Project Goal:

Ensure that early childhood paraprofessional preservice programs adequately prepare paraprofessionals to serve infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities.

- OSEP-funded personnel preparation project (325N) working with Virginia's Community College System to prepare paraprofessionals to work with young children with disabilities and their families.
- Collaborative partners: Virginia Community College System, community college faculty, representatives from state agencies, and parents of young children with disabilities.
- Strengthened content in 6 courses in the existing Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Early Childhood Education offered in 9 of Virginia's community colleges.
- Added evidence-based content to provide new knowledge, strategies, and support in order to produce graduates who, in addition to being highly qualified, are well-prepared to work with young children with disabilities.

Major Activities

- Support faculty in building their capacity to translate newly adopted evidence-based curriculum content.
- Support faculty in their professional development activities to include accessing new information to increase their knowledge in regards to working with children of varying abilities
- Evaluation Priorities:
 - o Fidelity of Implementation
 - o Faculty Self-Assessment
 - o Effectiveness of Required Activities
 - o Impact on Students

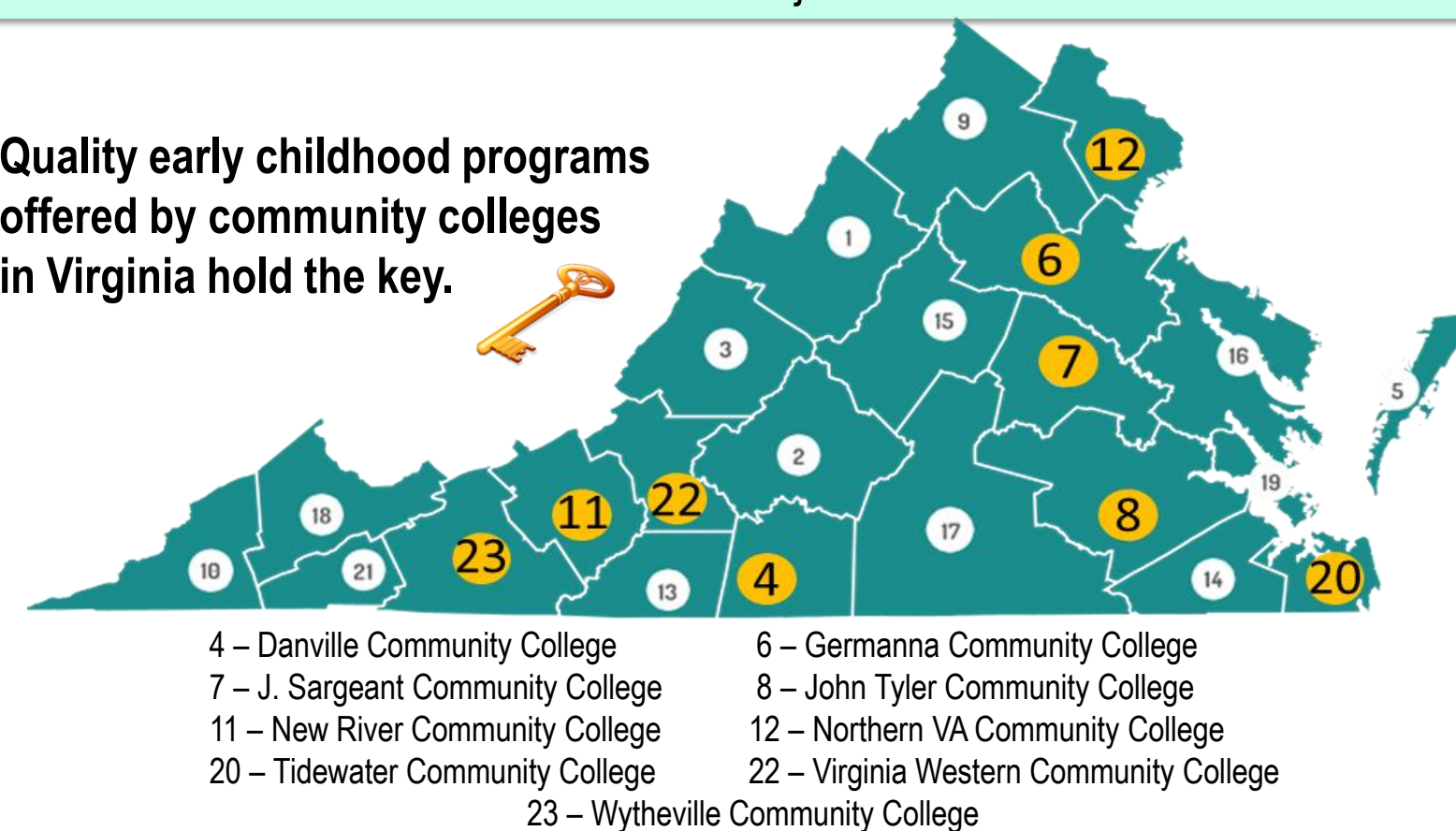
"Students were able to identify at least one example of a modification to their observation site that would enhance experiences and learning for one or more children in that class."



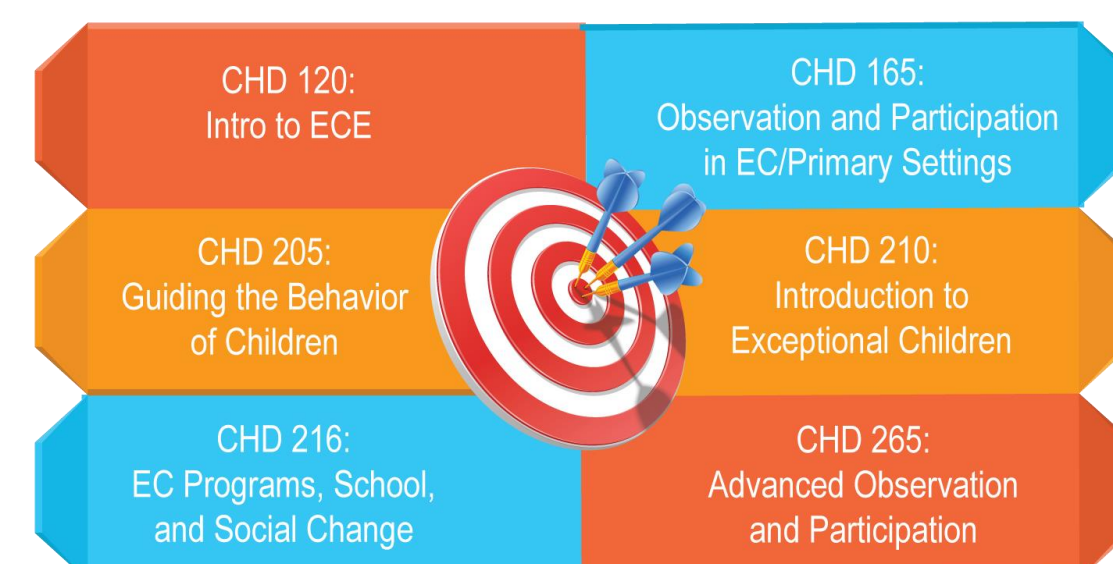
Lessons Learned

- Collaborative relationships are key
- Built on other projects and initiatives
- It's a very small EC world
- Project met a need identified by faculty members
- State has consistent course numbers/ objectives/content

Quality early childhood programs offered by community colleges in Virginia hold the key.



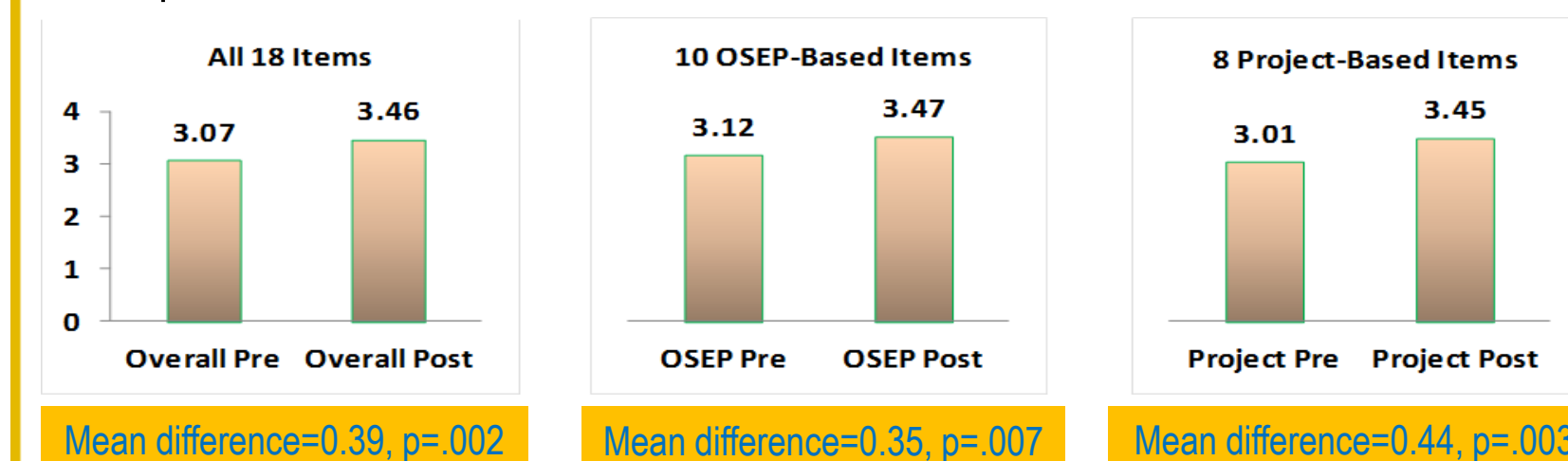
Targeted Courses and Proposed Content



PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

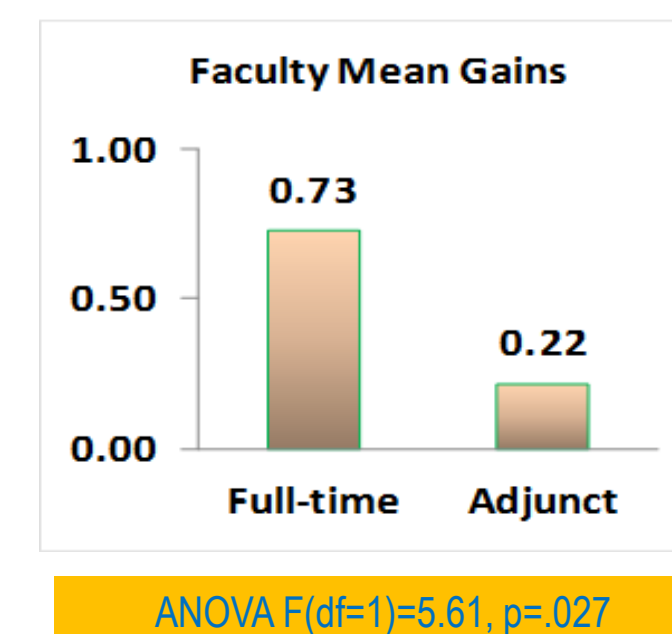
Impact on Faculty

- Faculty members from the participating community colleges were asked to complete an 18-item self-assessment survey before beginning project implementation, and again toward the end of the project period; 24 faculty took the survey both times.
- We compared the pre-post change in overall mean and on two subscales formed from (a) 10 items based on the OSEP indicators and (b) 8 project-developed content items. Statistically significant differences were found for all three comparisons:



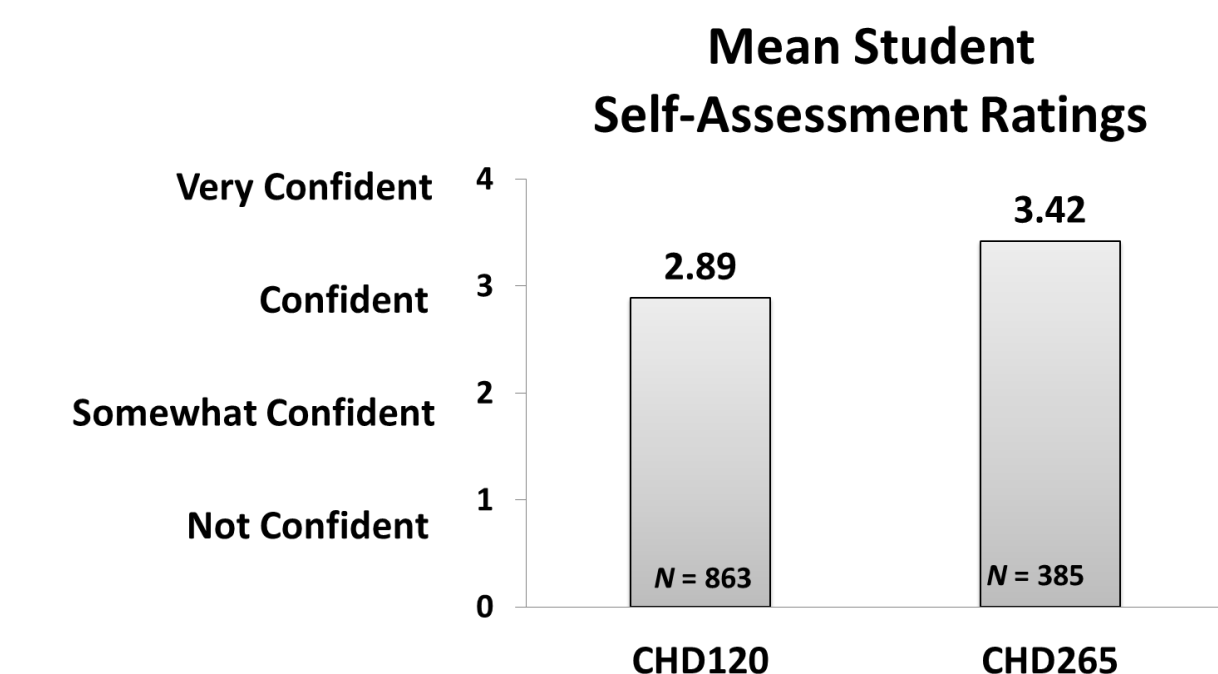
Analyses of Gains by Faculty Role and Implementation Start Date

- We also examined whether there were differences in pre-post gains depending upon whether faculty were employed in a full-time or adjunct capacity, and whether implementation was begun in January 2012 (Cohort 1) or Fall 2012 (Cohorts 2 & 3). **There was a statistically significant difference found for faculty role, with full-time faculty making greater gains from pre to post than adjunct faculty.**

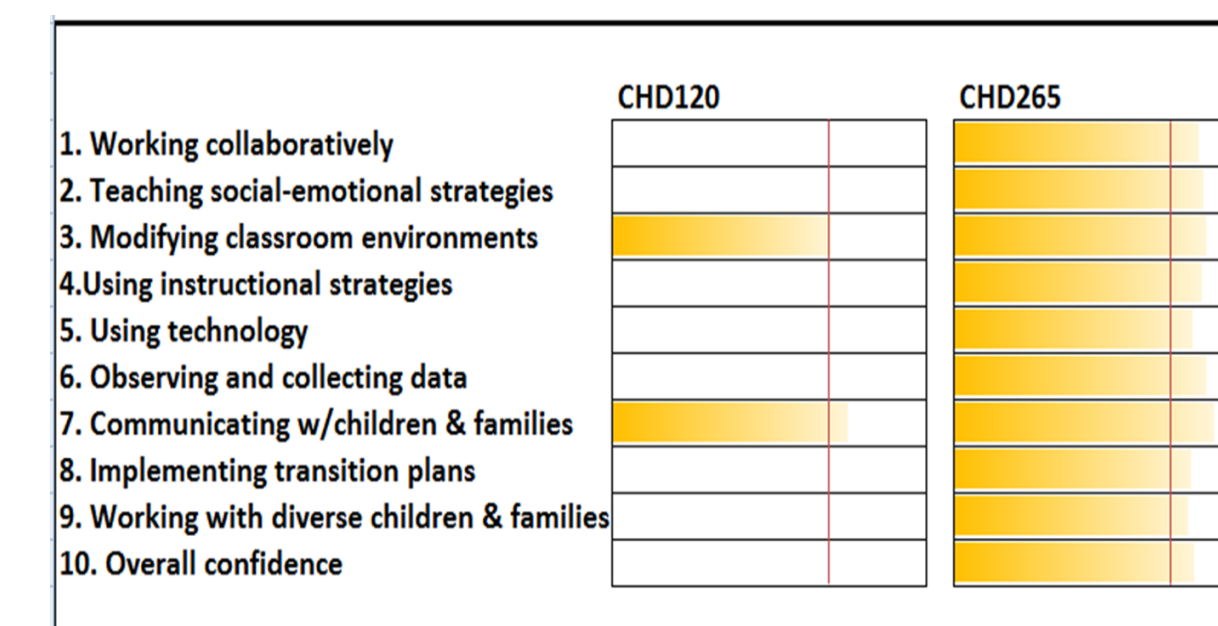


Impact on Students

- Students completed a 10-item Self-Assessment Survey at the start of CHD120 (the first of the 6 courses in the enhanced course sequence) and again at the end of CHD265 (the last course in the enhanced sequence).
- Students were asked to self-report how **confident they felt in their knowledge and skills** to include children with disabilities in classrooms by using the range of evidence-based practices targeted by the project.

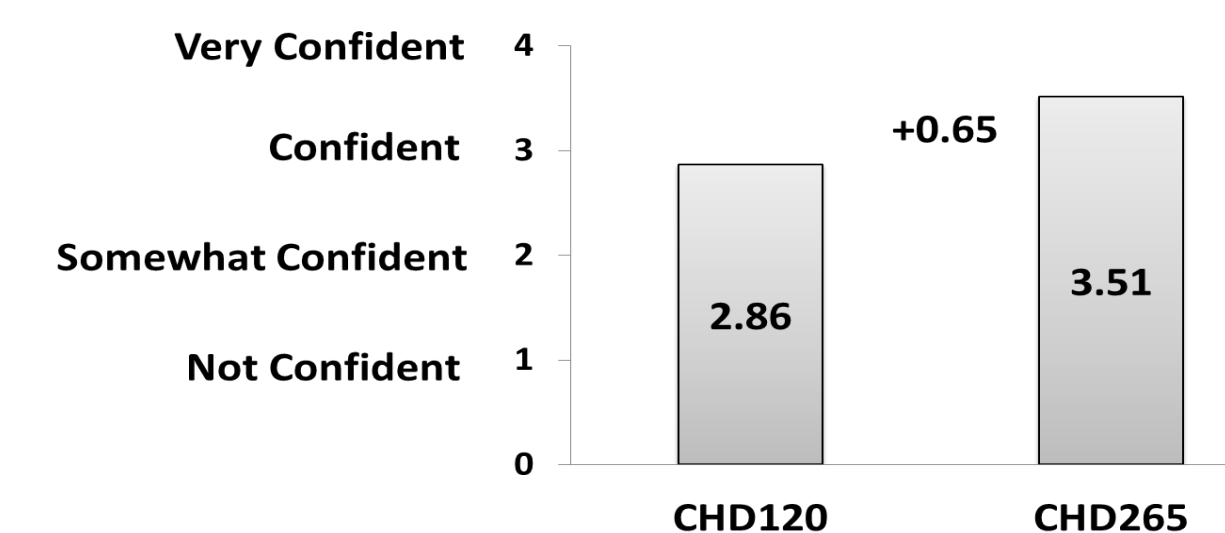


- At the beginning of CHD 120, students rated themselves as Confident or more than Confident (mean rating of 3.00 or higher) on only 2 items.
- At the end of CHD265 – the last of the 6 enhanced courses, students rated themselves as Confident or higher on all 10 items.



Item with Greatest Mean Gain

Observing & Collecting Data to Monitor Progress & Identify Possible Developmental Delays



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Fidelity of Implementation

84% Faculty implemented **1,566** out of **1,871** required activities.

Implementation

Where? **9** community colleges
Who? **84** faculty
What? **330** courses