

# 2013

## PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY INTERVENTION PRESERVICE KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS Insights & Recommendations for Supporting Student Preparation

*Findings of online surveys of students, faculty, local system managers and EI administrators about their perceptions of the knowledge and skill levels of students preparing to work in the field of early intervention*



AUTHORS:

Dana C. Childress, MEd

Corinne F. Hill, MEd

Susan J. Murdock, PhD



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# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## **Local system managers and early intervention (EI) administrators find that students do not have sufficient early intervention knowledge or skills prior to practica or student teaching.**

Students particularly need more course-based instruction on *IFSP development, Virginia's early intervention process, service coordination, and Federal Part C requirements* prior to practica and student teaching/internships. Students also need to develop greater skills in *family-centered practices, IFSP development, coaching and modeling during EI visits, and managing/ completing documentation* during coursework prior to their field placements.

## **Less than half of Early Childhood Special Education/Inclusive Early Childhood Education program content is specifically focused on early intervention.**

Responding Early Childhood Special Education/Inclusive Early Childhood Education faculty indicated that *less than half of their program's content is specifically focused on early intervention, with most faculty indicating that only 11 – 25% of their program focuses on early intervention.*

## **Students do not feel prepared for practica and student teaching.**

While most students indicated that they feel prepared to work in early intervention upon graduation, they do not feel sufficiently prepared prior to their practica or student teaching. Similar to the ratings by local system managers, students indicated that they particularly lack knowledge in Part C requirements, IFSP development, and Virginia's early intervention process. Students recognized that they had little or no knowledge about intervention strategies for children and families. Students also indicated that they had little or no skills in IFSP development, evaluation and assessment, managing/completing documentation, and coaching/modeling during EI visits.

## **In comparison to local system managers/El administrators and students, faculty are often more optimistic about students' level of preparation prior to practica and student teaching.**

All surveyed students and 90% of the local system managers/El administrators indicated that students had little or no knowledge of federal Part C requirements prior to student teaching. In contrast, faculty perceived that students had much greater knowledge; only 33% of the faculty rated students as having little or no knowledge of federal requirements.

*Under 'Topics and Trends' on the EIPD website you will find information, resources, training modules, and other learning tools to help you expand your knowledge of early intervention.*

## **Local system managers/El administrators and faculty utilize the Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center (EIPD) website to enhance student learning.**

Most faculty and local system managers/El administrators use websites more often than other resources when supporting students. They most often use the online modules and other features of the Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center (EIPD) website ([www.eipd.vcu.edu](http://www.eipd.vcu.edu)). Faculty and local system managers/El administrators reported that they most often *require* students to complete the online modules, access early intervention "Topics and Trends" and watch videos on the EIPD site.

## **Faculty often require students to complete modules or other learning activities through the EIPD website.**

Nearly all faculty access the EIPD website and require students to complete at least one learning module, typically the Family Centered Practices, Virginia's Early Intervention Service Pathway, Child Development, Virginia's Practitioner Requirements, or IFSP 101 modules.



# Survey of Student Preparation

In Virginia, the Integrated Training Collaborative (ITC) is a contractual project funded by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDS). The DBHDS serves as the state lead agency for Virginia's early intervention system under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The ITC is responsible for the oversight and implementation of Virginia's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) for early intervention. The ITC shares a commitment to a coordinated and consistent plan of preservice and inservice professional development in order to ensure the provision of services by highly qualified personnel. The ITC brings together the experience and expertise of providers, family members, university faculty, Part C staff, and other dedicated individuals to help implement professional development opportunities and to enhance educational networking on behalf of infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

In response to questions about how the Integrated Training Collaborative (ITC) could support improved preservice preparation for future early intervention (EI) personnel in Virginia, the ITC conducted a study of perceptions of student preparation. Surveys were emailed to local system managers and EI administrators of Part C early intervention programs, university faculty from graduate programs preparing students, and graduate students who recently completed their EI field experiences. The purpose of these surveys was to ascertain the extent to which students are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to start an early intervention practicum or student teaching placement. Information was also gathered about the variety of resources used to prepare students for working in early intervention. It was the intention of the ITC to use this information to develop recommendations about how to most

effectively use the resources currently available to support student preparation. It was also anticipated that this information would inform the development of additional professional development products that faculty and students could use during graduate training.

Links to the surveys were sent to faculty from the eight universities in Virginia with graduate programs preparing early childhood special education/early intervention students via email. Faculty were then asked to share the link to the student survey with their students via email. Respondents from seven out of the eight universities replied to the surveys, including:

- George Mason University
- James Madison University
- Lynchburg College
- Old Dominion University
- Radford University
- University of Virginia
- Virginia Commonwealth University

A total of 11 faculty, 38 local system managers and EI administrators, and 21 students responded to the surveys. Among the 12 students who responded to the question regarding their plans for working in early intervention after graduation, 8 (67%) indicated that they do plan to work in the field. Similarly, 13 of the 21 students responded to a question about how prepared they felt to work in early intervention upon graduation. While most (77%) of the 13 responding students indicated that they felt prepared, students, local system managers/EI administrators and faculty were less confident about student knowledge and skills related to early intervention at the time of their practica or student teaching placements. This report demonstrates the need for more infused learning and skill development prior to student practica and student teaching.

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*Many student programs do not spend much time on  
EI information in the classroom.  
– Local System Manager/Administrator*

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This report also provides a summary of information learned about perceptions of student knowledge and skills related to early intervention prior to practica and student teaching experiences. Additionally, information about the resources utilized to support student preparation is also summarized. This report concludes with recommendations for improving preservice preparation of future early intervention personnel in Virginia.



# Overview of Early Intervention Practica

Both students and faculty indicated that early intervention practica were typically completed either at the beginning or towards the end of the student's graduate program. Specifically, 7 (47%) of the responding 15 students completed their practicum during the first two semesters; 2 (13%) completed the practicum midway; and 6 (40%) completed their practicum in the last two semesters. When completed at the beginning of the program, practica were often completed prior to the student having completed coursework in early intervention.

Most students completed their practicum at Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia early intervention programs; the others were through private providers or with a non-profit agency. Students were most often required to conduct the following tasks during their practica:

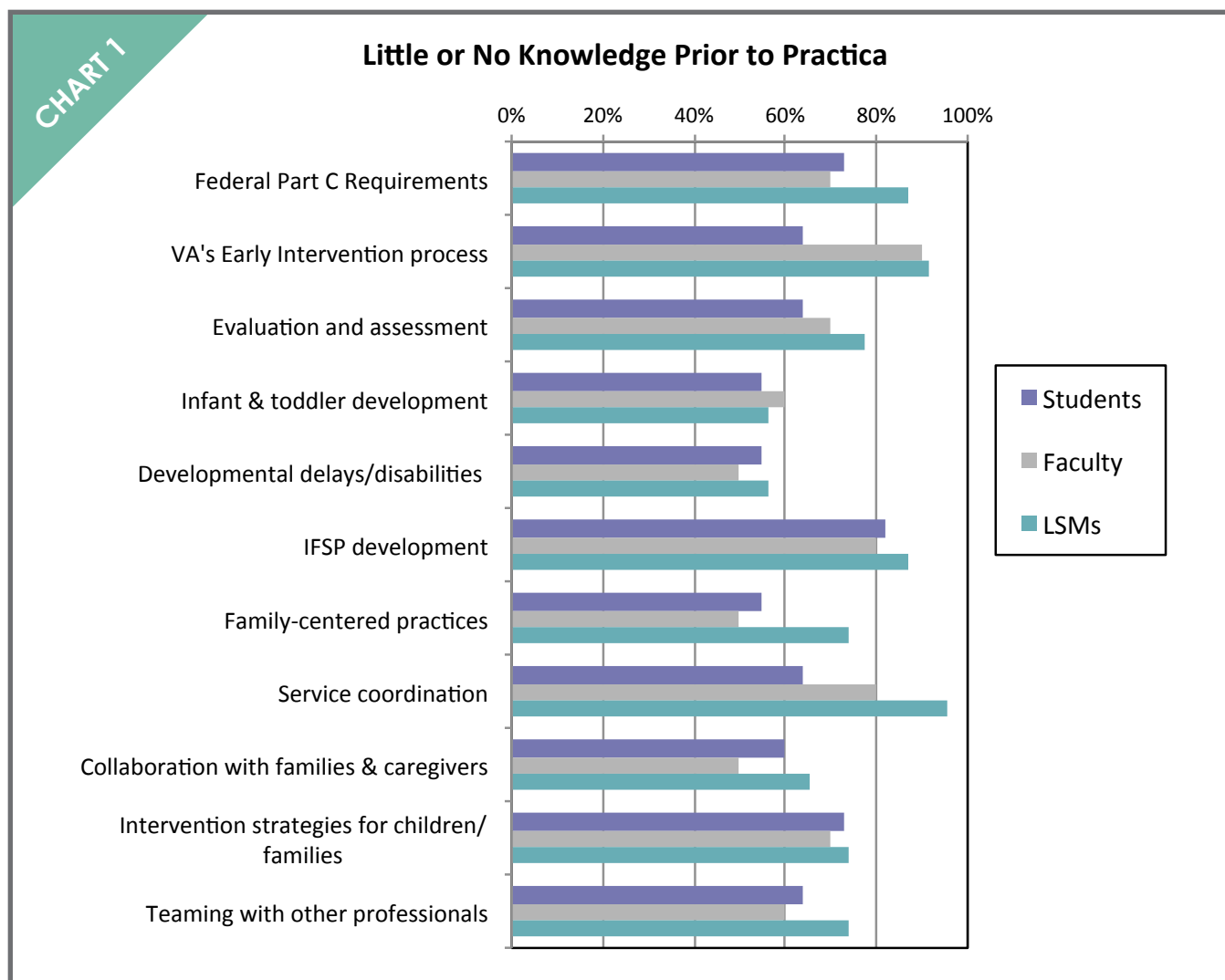
- Participate in the early intervention process (intake, eligibility determination, assessment for service planning, IFSP development, transition)
- Observe and participate in developmental services/education visits
- Observe and participate in other visits (OT, PT, ST, Service Coordination)
- Review child records
- Practice completing paperwork

# Preparation Needed for Practica

## Need for More Knowledge Prior to Early Intervention Practica

Students, faculty, and local system managers/EI administrators rated students on the extent to which students had pre-practica knowledge about 11 different topic areas. Ratings were on a four-point scale, from “Not knowledgeable at all” to “Very knowledgeable.”

As shown in Chart 1, at least half of the students, faculty, and local system managers/EI administrators indicated that students had little or no knowledge prior to their practica in terms of all the topics studied. Students, faculty, and local system managers/EI administrators were the least confident in students’ pre-practicum knowledge about IFSP development, Virginia’s Early Intervention process, service coordination, and Federal Part C requirements.



Local system managers and EI administrators (LSMs) were more likely than students or faculty to find that students were unprepared at the time of the practica. For example, 96% of the local system managers/administrators indicated that students have little or no knowledge about service coordination prior to the practica, in contrast to 80% of the faculty and 64% of the students. In most instances, faculty indicated that students were much more prepared while students and local system managers/EI administrators' perceptions were more closely matched at a lower estimate of preparedness.

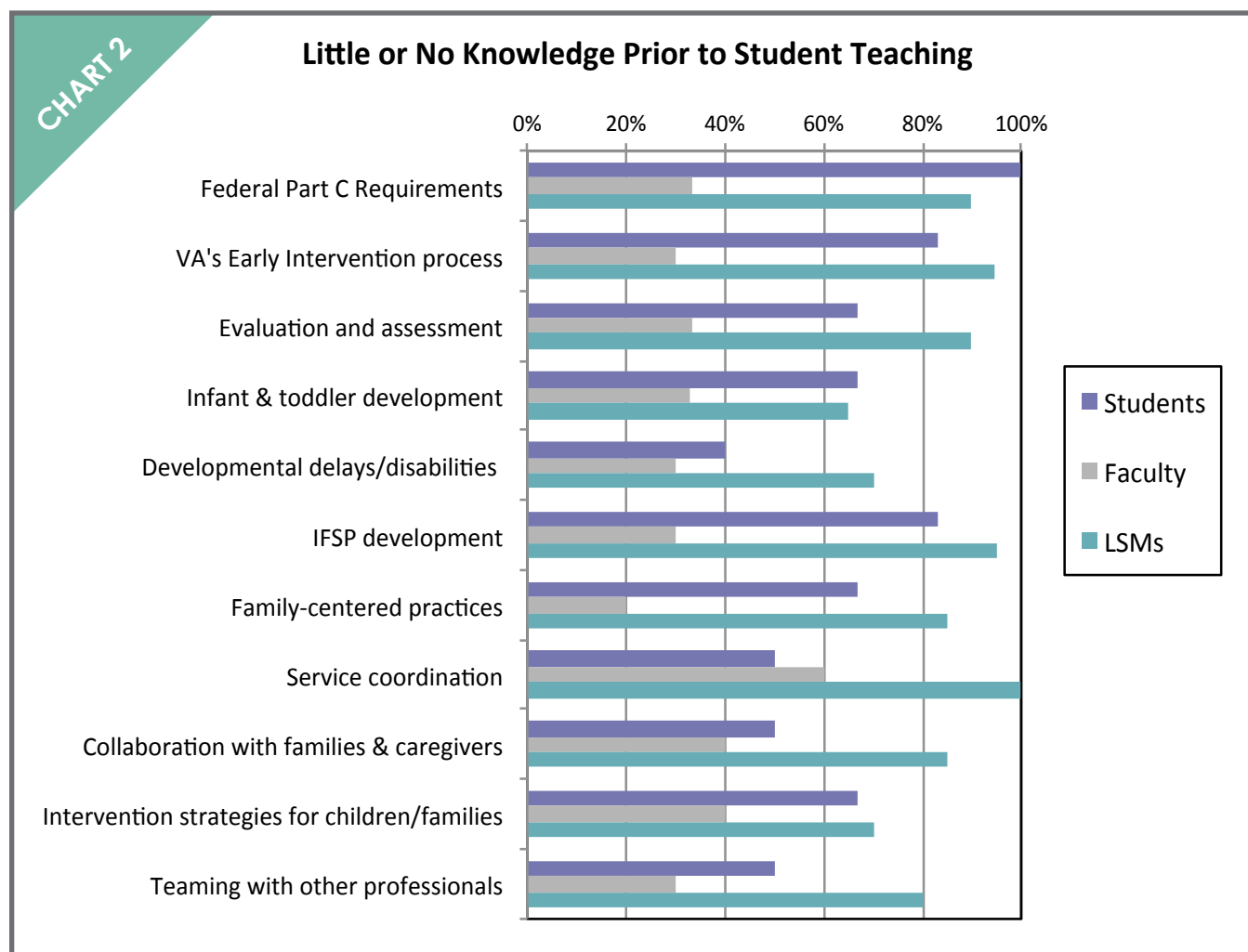
After weighting and averaging the ratings of the topics, the need for information and education is greatest in the following topics, which are listed in rank order.

## Need for **Knowledge** Prior to Practica

1. IFSP development
2. VA's Early Intervention process
3. Service coordination
4. Federal Part C Requirements
5. Evaluation and assessment
6. Intervention strategies for children/families
7. Family-centered practices
8. Collaboration with families and caregivers
9. Teaming with other professionals
10. Developmental delays/disabilities
11. Infant and toddler development

## Need for More Skills Prior to Early Intervention Practica

Similar to the need for knowledge, students appear to have limited skills in several early intervention practices before they start their practica. Students, faculty, and local system managers/EI administrators rated the extent to which students had skills prior to their practica in terms of 12 different skill areas. Ratings were on a four-point scale, from “Not skilled at all” to “Very skilled.”



Findings showed that students' pre-practica skills were even more limited than their pre-practica knowledge. Most alarmingly, all of the local system managers/ EI administrators indicated that students had limited or no pre-practica skills in family-centered practices and 73% of the LSMs indicated that students had no skills in IFSP development. Nearly all of the local system managers/EI administrators, faculty, and students indicated that students lacked pre-practica skills in IFSP development.

Skills development is most strongly needed before practica in all of the 12 skill areas, but particularly in family-centered practices, IFSP development, coaching and modeling at EI visits, and managing/ completing documentation. As expected, students were less likely to have developed skills in early intervention practices prior to their practica than prior to student teaching.

Chart 2 demonstrates that in comparison to students and faculty, local system managers/EI administrators were more likely to rate the students as having low skills. At least three-fourths of the local system managers/EI administrators indicated that students had little or no skills in each of the early intervention practices as well as in verbal communication, and about half indicated that they had little or no skills in written communication. The following skill development areas, listed in rank order, are most strongly needed.

## Need for **Skills** Prior to Practicum

1. IFSP development
2. Coaching and modeling at EI visits
3. Managing/completing documentation
4. Family-centered practices
5. Evaluation and assessment
6. Supporting development within natural environments
7. Collaboration with families and caregivers
8. Individualizing intervention
9. Working with diverse families
10. Working with other professionals
11. Communicating verbally
12. Communicating in writing





# Overview of Early Intervention Student Teaching

The early intervention student teaching/internship was almost always completed at the end of the student's graduate program. Most student teaching/internships were completed in Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia early intervention programs. Student teaching requirements typically included:

- Review child records
- Participate in the early intervention process (intake, eligibility determination, assessment for service planning, IFSP development, transition)
- Practice completing paperwork (with supervision)
- Observe and participate in developmental services/education visits
- Observe and participate in other types of EI visits (OT, PT, ST, Service Coordination)
- Take the lead on developmental services visits (with supervision)
- Follow an assigned child and family through all aspects of the EI process

Students in student teaching/internship roles typically reviewed child records and participated in the early intervention process, but had fewer opportunities to practice paperwork, participate in developmental services or other early intervention visits, take the lead on developmental services visits, or follow an assigned child/family through the early intervention process.

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*Overall, I had a wonderful learning experience in my EI practicum.*

*The only barrier I can report is being introduced to some documents and procedures in early intervention that had not yet been covered in my graduate courses, such as all the components of the IFSP, contact notes, etc.*

*– Student*

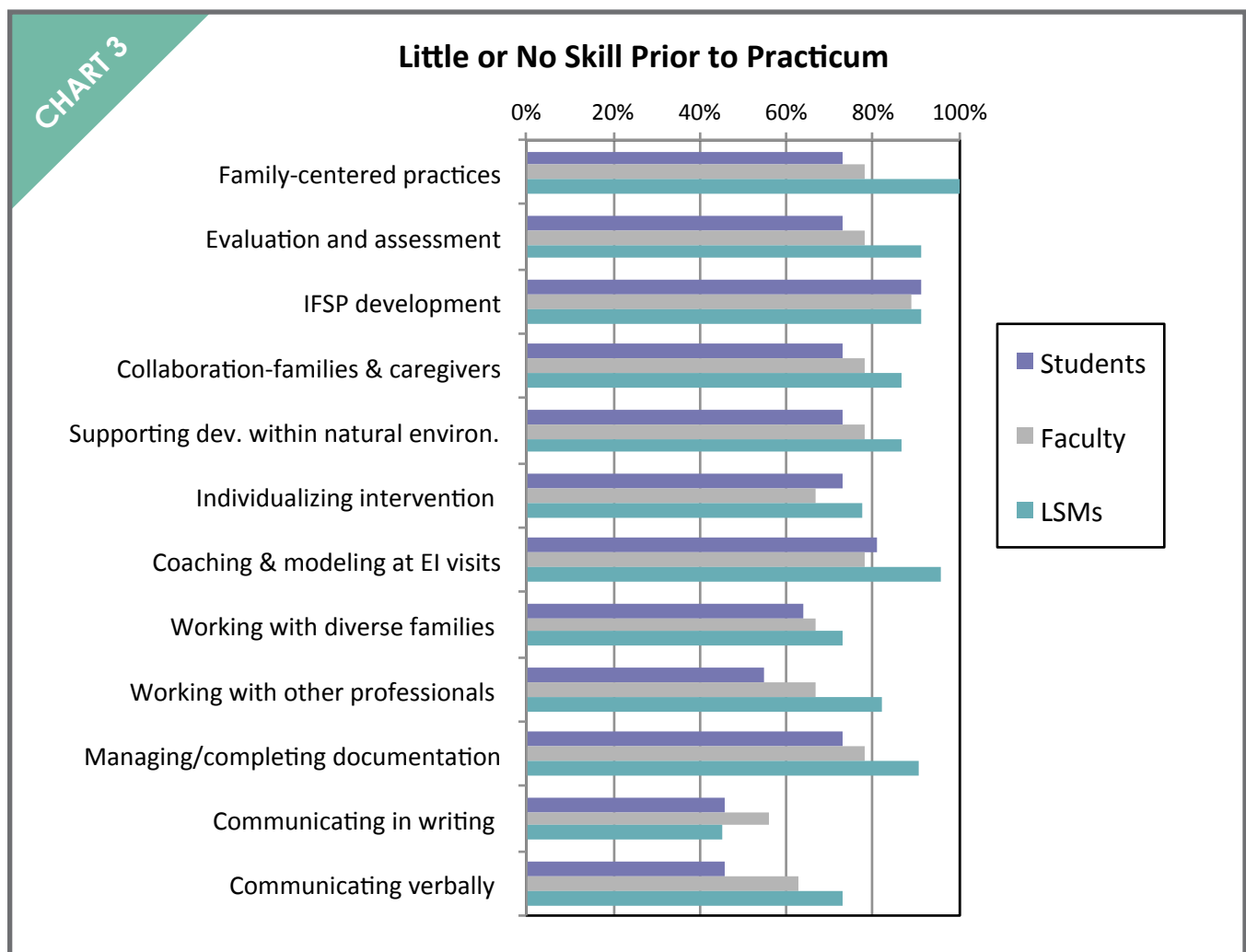
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# Preparation Needed for Student Teaching

## Need for More Knowledge Prior to Early Intervention Student Teaching

Students, faculty, and local system managers/EI administrators also rated students on the extent to which students had sufficient knowledge prior to student teaching in terms of the same 11 knowledge topic areas. Ratings were on a four-point scale, from “Not knowledgeable at all” to “Very knowledgeable.”

Chart 3 shows that while most students and the vast majority of local system managers/EI administrators indicated that students lacked relevant knowledge prior to student teaching, faculty were significantly more optimistic about student knowledge. For example, all students and 90% of the local system managers/EI administrators indicated that students had little or no knowledge of federal Part C requirements prior to student teaching, in contrast to only 33% of the faculty.



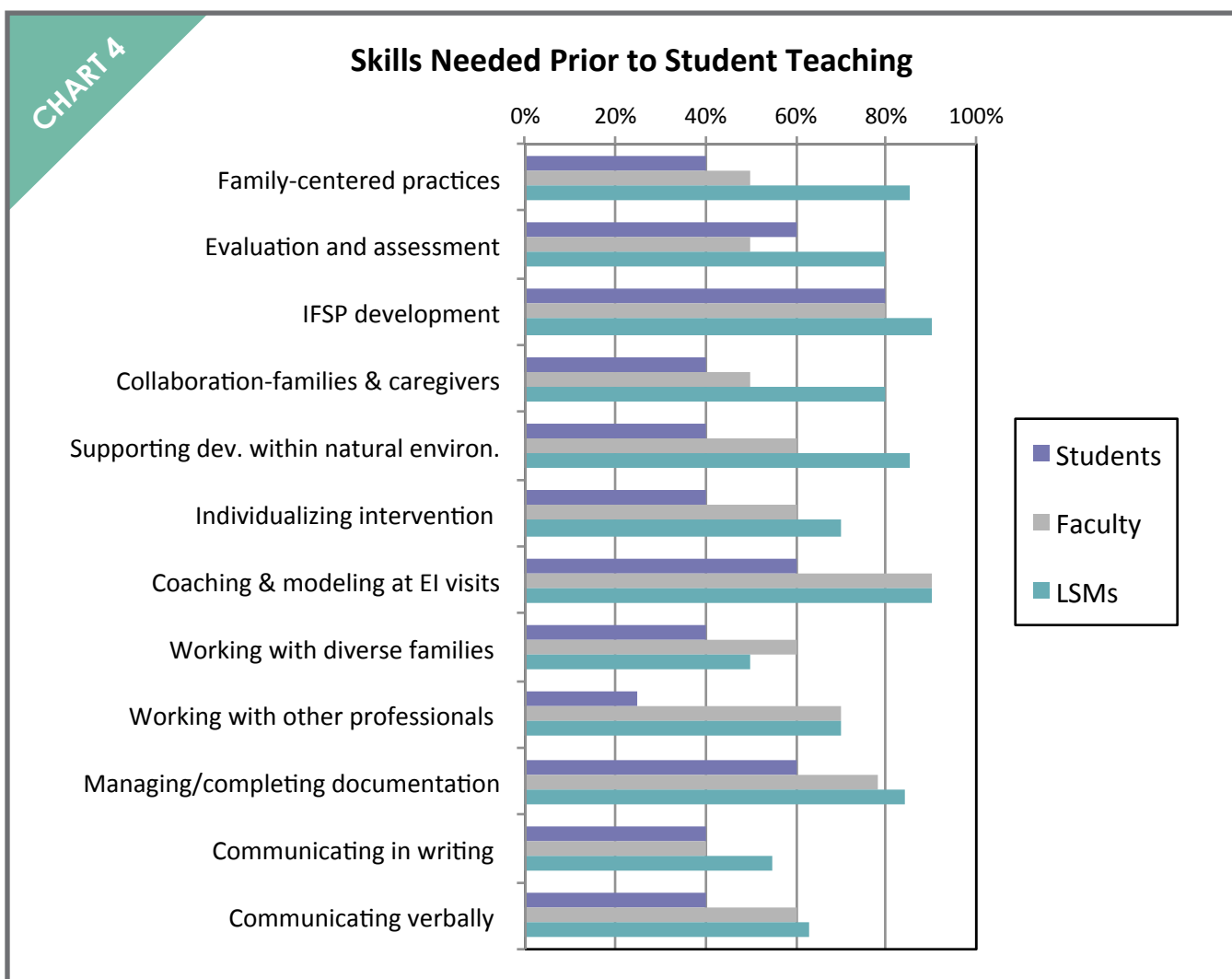
The need for information and education gained through coursework prior to student teaching is greatest in the following topics, listed in rank order. The topics were weighted and averaged to determine the topics of most need, based on ratings by students, faculty, and local system managers/El administrators.

## Need for **Knowledge** Prior to Student Teaching

1. Service coordination
2. Federal Part C Requirements
3. IFSP development
4. VA's Early Intervention process
5. Evaluation and assessment
6. Intervention strategies for children/families
7. Collaboration with families and caregivers
8. Family-centered practices
9. Developmental delays/disabilities
10. Infant and toddler development
11. Teaming with other professionals

## Need for More Skills Prior to Early Intervention Student Teaching

Because student teaching is typically completed at the end of the course of study, students tended to have more skills than at the time of their practicum. For example, 73% of the students identified that they had little or no skills in collaborating with families and caregivers at the time of their practicum, while only 40% of the students indicated little skill in this area at the time of student teaching. Still, the majority of local system managers/EI administrators identified low skill levels at the time of student teaching for each of the 12 skills areas studied.





The need for skill development is the greatest in the following topics, listed in rank order.

## Need for **Skills** Prior to Student Teaching

1. IFSP development
2. Managing/completing documentation
3. Coaching and modeling at EI visits
4. Family-centered practices
5. Communicating verbally
6. Evaluation and assessment
7. Supporting development within natural environments
8. Individualizing intervention
9. Working with other professionals
10. Working with diverse families
11. Collaboration with families and caregivers
12. Communicating in writing

# Resources Used to Prepare Students

Key resources used by most faculty to teach early intervention courses include textbooks, websites, journals, and videos. Websites are used by all Early Childhood Special Education/Inclusive Early Childhood faculty, with 58% “always” using website resources. The two websites most often accessed are:

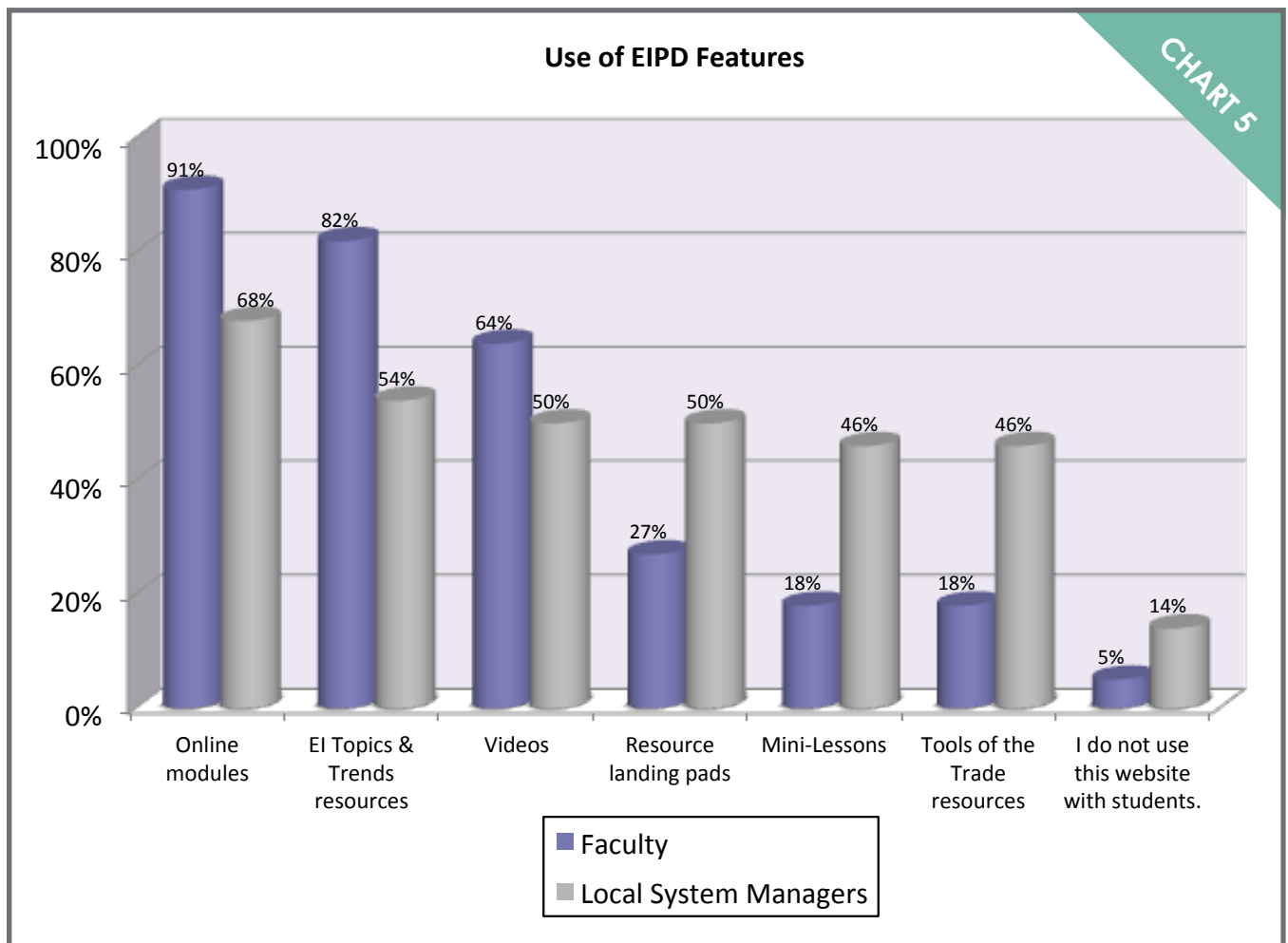
- Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center ([www.eipd.vcu.edu](http://www.eipd.vcu.edu))
- Infant and Toddler Connection ([www.infantva.org](http://www.infantva.org))

**Nearly all faculty (91%) use the Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center (EIPD) website ([www.eipd.vcu.edu](http://www.eipd.vcu.edu)).** Of the 11 responding faculty, 10 (91%) access the EIPD website and 10 (91%) require students to complete at least one learning module. At the time of the survey, the following modules were required by faculty.

- Family Centered Practices (n=9; 82% of faculty)
- Virginia’s Early Intervention Service Pathway (n=8, 73%)
- Child Development (n=6, 55%)
- Virginia’s Practitioner Requirements (n=5, 46%)
- IFSP 101: Introduction to the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia’s IFSP Development Process (n=5, 46%)
- Early Intervention Service Coordination and Targeted Case Management (n=4, 36%)

Like faculty, local system managers and EI administrators utilize website resources more often than any other resource to compliment student learning during practica and student teaching, primarily utilizing the Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center ([www.eipd.vcu.edu](http://www.eipd.vcu.edu)) and the Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia ([www.infantva.org](http://www.infantva.org)) websites. Other websites utilized include Zero to Three ([www.zerotothree.org/](http://www.zerotothree.org/)) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Learn the Signs. Act Early ([www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/parents/index.html)).

Both local system managers/EI administrators and faculty reported accessing specific resources on the EIPD website to enhance student learning, including the free online modules, videos, and early intervention “Topics and Trends” resources about specific disabilities and practice topics. Chart 5 illustrates that the majority of local system managers/EI administrators and faculty refer students to the website, either as part of the class requirements for as an instructional resource. Faculty and local system managers most often require students to complete the online modules, access early intervention “Topics and Trends” and watch videos.



# Successful Practica and Student Teaching in Early Intervention: Positive Aspects and Challenges

Students reported positive aspects of their early intervention field placements related to three main themes: positive interactions with host programs; positive interactions with staff; and benefits of gaining hands-on experience. Challenges with EI placements reported by students included maintaining professional and emotional boundaries in their interactions with families; locating and traveling to placements; program staff being too busy to help; and not being introduced to documentation and IFSP processes before the practicum experience.

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*The staff was very helpful in helping me to understand interventions.*

*I was able to sit with staff members as they  
planned interventions and home visits.*

*I was also able to help implement a lesson plan for a weekly home visit.*

*Great experience overall. – Student*

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Faculty, local system managers and EI administrators cited a number of challenges with supervising practicum students and student teachers. Specifically, local system managers/EI administrators reported challenges with lack of time for student training, lack of student preparedness, lack of available staff to supervise students, and concerns with student evaluations provided by faculty.

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*Time is the biggest barrier. It takes considerable time  
to have students here and to keep them busy.*

*The second challenge is that typically the students are not  
very well-prepared so it takes even more time to explain EI to them.*

*– Local System Manager/EI Administrator*

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*Students seem to come to placement with very little background/classwork in infant/toddler development as well as what early intervention is and how it works.*

*It takes a substantial amount of time to orient practica students to the program let alone get them interacting easily with families.*

*Student teachers often have some experience with EI due to their practica placement but again, with no classwork geared toward EI, it is very difficult for them to provide developmental services as they have not had opportunity to learn how. This issue is further compounded with limited learning in early infant/toddler development; it is very difficult for them to develop strategies until later in their placement. In addition, EI services are provided in a home which requires students to interact easily and quickly with families in a different environment than a school setting.*

*Again coursework and experience in active listening, open-ended questioning, and infant/toddler assessment materials would be beneficial.*

*– Local System Manager/EI Administrator*





Faculty reported frustrations with not having enough EI placements; problems with scheduling placements; travel constraints to placements located far away from the university; lack of uniform policies across placement agencies; and difficulty managing summer placements.

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*We don't have the relationships established,  
we don't have enough placements for our students!*  
– Faculty

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*Finding enough placements for students within a  
reasonable driving distance without overloading the local ITCs.*  
– Faculty

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*Lack of uniform policies for students to work in agencies,  
lack of qualified EI placements and supervisors,  
basically too many students for too few placements.*  
– Faculty

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While respondents suggested that there was good communication and cooperation between the universities and field placements, several local system managers/EI administrators reported that they do not have the time, staff, or resources available to accept practica student or student teachers. Others suggested more opportunities to collaborate with faculty, particularly to assure enhanced pre-practica and pre-student teaching knowledge and skills.

# Suggestions from Respondents for Enhancing Student Knowledge and Skills

While some universities have reorganized the timing of practica or student teaching to better prepare students, most faculty, local system managers/administrators, and students expressed a need for improved student preparation. Most suggestions referred to providing videos or other instruction about conducting early intervention visits, increasing amount of early intervention content available to students, and developing a pre-practica, introductory experience.

When asked for suggestions about how students could be better prepared for their EI placements, **students most often replied that coursework related to early intervention should be completed before the placement experience.** One student indicated that more coursework in EI was needed, noting that “if I never had the practicum experience, I may never [have] had the training I had in assessments and IFSPs.”

Faculty and local system managers/administrators provided general suggestions for improving students’ exposure to information and experiences related to EI as well as many specific ideas. They reiterated the need to ensure that students have more exposure to information about early intervention, working in natural environments, specific disabilities, and infant and toddler development prior to beginning their placements.

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*We are going to require our students to demonstrate mastery over EI content knowledge prior to placing them in EI placements in the future.*

*– Faculty*

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*Our students used to be placed in their EI student teaching setting before they had completed coursework related to IFSP development, coaching and collaborative teamwork. We have reorganized our classes so they take courses that cover EI content prior to their placement and this has helped.*

*– Faculty*

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Respondents suggested providing students with more practical information focusing on implementation of early intervention, further training in current IFSP development and goal writing practices, increasing the knowledge base about Part C services, and more information about “the real world of implementation.”

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*We need to revise our curriculum to add more  
focused EI content and skill development.  
– Faculty*

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More understanding was reportedly needed about the differences between clinical or school-based models of intervention and early intervention in natural environments.

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*Students placed in early intervention have limited exposure  
to infant and toddler information prior to placement.  
If they had an infant/toddler class, it was at least one year prior  
to their placement. The pre-service learning and training  
that these students are exposed to needs to shift the focus from  
preschool and in-school services to a more even focus on  
services in the natural environment and  
infants/toddlers, and their families.  
– Local System Manager/EI Administrator*

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Specific activities suggested by faculty and local system managers/administrators included:

- Using more instructional media;
- Inviting speakers to provide information about each discipline's role in EI;
- Providing online courses about development, family relationships, coaching and modeling;
- Offering shorter practicum experiences or one-day opportunities to follow a service provider for a day as an introduction to EI;
- Placing students in day care centers for experience with children with typical development;
- Requiring placements for no less than 20 hours/week in an EI setting;
- Integrate attending Kaleidoscope: New Perspectives in Service Coordination, Levels I & II training into course requirements;
- Increasing observation time during home visits;
- Viewing videos of EI practices in natural environments; and
- Revising university program curricula to add more focused EI content and skill development

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*If they are planning  
to do their placements  
in Early Intervention, maybe  
they can do the  
online modules while  
still in school.*  
– *Local System Manager/EI  
Administrator*

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Faculty and local system managers/EI administrators recommended that the Integrated Training Collaborative develop a student intern manual, introductory and "typical day" videos, and instruction on parent collaboration and communication.

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*A Student Intern notebook would be helpful - containing Part C background info, State EI data, descriptions of services, sample IFSP, info on natural environments, etc. The students could take these notebooks with them as they continue their formal education. The notebooks would serve as a reminder that EI is a possible career field for them.*

*- Faculty*

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*Continue what you do as you have developed great resources and training modules. Consider a “day in the life” video so students can understand the many different roles an EI provider plays and what a typical day is like.*

*- Faculty*

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*Continuing to develop materials like you have done that can be used in courses to prepare students. It would be extremely valuable to be able to have an example (including video clips and sample completed materials) that would follow a child and family from initial contact through all of the EI process to give students a “total picture” of what happens at each step. Continuing to share updates with IHE faculty on Part C changes and recommended practices. Continuing to have Integrated Training Collaborative staff serve as guest speakers in classes.*

*- Faculty*

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# Summary

Results from these surveys suggest that improvements are needed in the preservice preparation of future early intervention professionals in Virginia. A significant discrepancy was consistently noted between faculty perceptions and the perceptions of students and local system managers/El administrators regarding student levels of knowledge and skills prior to both practica and student teaching. Students do not appear to feel prepared for early intervention field experiences and, similarly, local system managers/El administrators report finding students to be unprepared. This lack of adequate preparation certainly affects students' abilities to learn and participate during field experiences. It also appears to have a negative impact on the collaboration between universities and local early intervention systems.

Specifically, the most commonly reported areas of knowledge needed by students prior to both practica and student teaching included **IFSP development, Virginia's early intervention process, service coordination, and federal Part C regulations**. The most commonly reported skill areas needed by students included **IFSP development, coaching and modeling techniques, family-centered practices and managing and completing early intervention documentation**. While it may not be reasonable to expect that a student can skillfully develop an IFSP or complete documentation before working in the field, knowledge of the components and processes involved in IFSP development and documentation can be covered in coursework. Students may benefit from more content and practice using Virginia's IFSP form and practical exercises that prepare students for documenting their work with families. Because federal Part C regulations are consistent across states, students may benefit from coursework that covers these regulations in depth and relates them to the general early intervention process, spanning from referral through transition. Students in Virginia could use the state's early intervention process to provide a context in which to understand federal regulations, thereby improving knowledge of both federal and state-level requirements.

It is well established in the early intervention literature that service coordination is not typically covered in any depth in most graduate programs preparing early intervention personnel. Service coordination is a key component of the early intervention experience as service coordinators are the team leaders and managers of each family's intervention process. A thorough understanding of service coordination and the service coordinator's role on the early intervention team would better prepare students for team collaboration and, for many students, to assume this role as may be required in many early intervention programs whose staff manage dual roles.

Many graduate programs provide overviews of general early intervention practices but time is often limited to delve into practices in depth. These survey results suggest that students could benefit from course content in practical application in coaching and modeling strategies that are used during early intervention visits to support caregiver learning. There also appears to be a need to strengthen students' understanding of how to use family-centered practices. Using family-centered practices is a core concept in providing early intervention support, and using coaching and modeling strategies are recommended techniques for implementing these practices. Students appeared to have knowledge of these practices but had not yet developed skills for using them. Field experiences offer opportunities for students to practice implementing what they have learned during coursework so strengthening the discussion of family-centered practices and coaching and modeling techniques from a practical application level before students enter field experiences could better prepare them for using what they are learning in class.

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*Throughout the survey, I've commented on how interns bring fresh ideas and energy to my practice.*

*I am reenergized by their presence and am honored to have the insight of the interns and the university professors.*

*It is stimulating to interact with the professors as a frontline professional; the opportunity to refresh the importance of the IFSP process and awareness of supporting self advocacy for families is paramount to my belief in my daily work. So often, we can get bogged down in making sure we are meeting time lines, documenting and getting in all our visits for the month and we can lose sight of the process and honoring the purpose of the process.*

*Engaging with university professors and students in the rich environment of home visits with diverse families supports and encourages a reflective practice.*

*– Local System Manager/Administrator*

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# Recommendations for how the Integrated Training Collaborative can Support Preservice Preparation

The purpose of conducting this survey was to investigate perceptions of student preparation in Virginia. It was hoped that the information gathered could be used to identify targeted areas of need in preservice personnel development and inform the work of the Integrated Training Collaborative (ITC) regarding student preparation. This information would also inform how the ITC can better support faculty in their work as well as build resources for students to assist in their preparation. It was also the hope of the ITC that the information gathered from these surveys would be useful to university faculty as they conduct ongoing formative assessments of their programs.

In reviewing these results, it is clear that improvements are needed and that there is much that the ITC can do to support student preparation. The following are recommendations from the ITC to improve preservice preparation of early intervention personnel:

## **Develop a student preparation tab on the VEIPD training portal**

One recommendation from survey respondents suggested that the ITC develop a student notebook. Rather than developing a resource that would regularly need to be updated and reprinted, the ITC will develop a page on the training portal that brings together resources for students and faculty that support preservice preparation. This page could be easily integrated into coursework and accessed by students, faculty, and local system managers/ EI administrators when needed.

## **Notify faculty when the new video series on effective intervention is ready**

The ITC is currently developing a 3-part series of short videos featuring VA early intervention providers talking about their work with families. These videos will also include demonstrations of early intervention in action in natural environments. These videos will be accessible online at no cost on the VEIPD site and faculty are encouraged to embed them in course content.

## Develop a “day in the life of an early interventionist” video

The ITC currently offers a variety of videos of early intervention providers and families discussing relevant early intervention topics, such as the importance of intervention, advice from families, descriptions of supports, etc. A video featuring a typical day for an early interventionist that includes intervention visits, team collaboration, and documentation activities will be added to the training workplan for next year.

## Develop guidance for faculty on how VEIPD resources could be integrated into coursework

The ITC will develop guidance materials that are easily adaptable for use in courses across university programs. These materials will cluster VEIPD resources by course content topics so that faculty can easily see what resources are available and how they can be used in student preparation. Conducting a webinar for faculty regarding embedding the EIPD modules and other materials into required coursework is also being discussed.

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*The work of the Integrated Training Collaborative  
(e.g., the EIPD web site) has been an extremely valuable  
resource that has supported me in providing up to date information  
to students in preservice training and in my own professional growth.  
– Faculty*

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