

# Strengthening Intensive Intervention Preparation: A Guide for Teacher Preparation Faculty



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National Center on  
**INTENSIVE INTERVENTION**

at American Institutes for Research ■



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NCII would like to thank the following faculty members for their contributions to the NCII faculty summer workshop:

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- Dr. Emily Bouck,  
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- Dr. Melissa Brydon,  
Regis University
- Dr. Eunsoo Cho,  
Michigan State University
- Dr. Natasha Feinberg,  
Rhode Island College
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Coastal Carolina University
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Western Colorado University
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University of Northern  
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- Dr. John Palladino,  
Eastern Michigan University
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University of Colorado at  
Colorado Springs
- Dr. Lynne Ryan,  
Providence College
- Dr. Alicia Saunders,  
University of North Carolina–  
Charlotte
- Dr. Rebecca Shankland,  
Appalachian State University
- Dr. Pamela Stecker,  
Clemson University
- Dr. Charis Wahman,  
Michigan State University
- Dr. Susan Marie Zoll,  
Rhode Island College

This document was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Grant No. HH326Q160001. Celia Rosenquist is the OSEP project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. Although permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: Hayes, L. (2021). *Strengthening intensive intervention preparation: A guide for teacher preparation faculty*. National Center on Intensive Intervention, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education.

## Introduction

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Special education teachers must have the skills to design and deliver intensive interventions for students with severe and persistent learning and behavioral needs. To ensure effective instruction for these students, preservice preparation programs must provide their teacher candidates with opportunities to learn, apply, and practice intensive intervention skills. Teacher preparation faculty play a critical role in ensuring the next generation of teachers have these opportunities.

This guide explains how teacher preparation faculty can incorporate resources from the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII) into preservice teacher preparation coursework and clinical experiences. The guide is organized by four types of courses that teacher candidates are likely to experience during the preparation program:

- Introductory courses,
- Methods courses,
- Assessment courses, and
- Clinical or practicum courses.

For each type of course, the guide lists common learning objectives for preservice teachers. Next, the guide identifies applicable NCII resources to address the learning objectives and offers suggestions for how faculty or candidates can use the resources in the course. The guide also includes program spotlights that feature examples of how faculty who participated in NCII's faculty summer workshop have integrated NCII resources into their courses.

### NCII Faculty Summer Workshop

Twenty faculty members participated in NCII's inaugural faculty workshop in summer 2021. Faculty members represented 14 universities across six states receiving intensive technical assistance supports from NCII.

Faculty members participated in two workshops with independent learning activities between workshops. During the first workshop, faculty identified course design objectives, discussed candidate needs, and explored NCII resources. In preparation for the second workshop, faculty were required to develop a draft syllabus and course artifact, including grading criteria. During the second workshop, faculty collaboratively reviewed and gave feedback on each other's materials. To see materials developed as a part of the workshop, please go the [Higher Education Faculty Resources](#) section of the NCII website.

## Introductory Courses

Almost every teacher candidate takes at least one course on special education during their preparation program. Candidates in special education take introductory courses that include content about the history and foundations of special education, characteristics of learners with disabilities, and special education law. Introductory courses are typically the first courses taken in a program because they provide foundational knowledge and skills for the remainder of the program.

I Want My Preservice Teacher Candidates to...	NCII Resource	Course Suggestions
<p><b>Define the key characteristics of intensive intervention.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Introduction to Intensive Intervention</a> (self-paced module)</p>	<p>Assign the self-paced modules as an asynchronous learning activity in a “flipped classroom” model. Candidates complete modules independently outside of class sessions and then extend their knowledge during class sessions through interactive learning activities.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Intensive Intervention: Myths and Facts</a></p>	<p>Use the myths and facts from the brief in a quiz or polling activity. Candidates discuss their answers with classmates.</p>
<p><b>Explain how Data-Based Individualization (DBI) offers a systematic process for the delivery of intensive intervention.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Data-Based Individualization: A Framework for Intensive Intervention</a></p>	<p>Assign the brief as essential course reading and reinforce the concepts through in-class discussions or online discussion boards.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Breaking Down the DBI Process Questions &amp; Considerations</a></p>	<p>Provide this one-page overview that summarizes the five steps of the DBI process.</p>
	<p><a href="#">DBI Training Materials</a></p>	<p>Incorporate the presentation slides, videos, and handouts from the DBI training materials into course lectures. Presentation slides include speaker notes to support effective presentation of the content.</p>
<p><b>Describe how intensive intervention fits in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Standards-Relevant Instruction &amp; MTSS or Response to Intervention (RTI)</a></p>	<p>Candidates explore the series of handouts that provide examples of how college- and career-ready standards can be applied across core instruction (Tier 1), secondary intervention (Tier 2), intensive intervention (Tier 3), and for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Candidates then choose a standard and complete their own example using the template.</p>

## Program Spotlight:

Candidates enrolled in Appalachian State University’s residency program leading to licensure in special education take SPE 5220: Characteristics Assessment, and Identification of Individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities. During the first week of class, candidates complete the [Introduction to Intensive Intervention](#) self-paced module. During the second week of class, candidates watch [videos of NCII experts](#) to deepen their understanding of the relationship between [intensive intervention, MTSS, and special education](#). Candidates extend their knowledge by discussing how these concepts apply to a case study of a student with intensive learning needs.

## Methods Courses

As teacher candidates progress through their program, they take courses about the theories and teaching practices of specific content areas. Candidates in special education commonly take courses about reading, behavior, classroom management, and other subject areas. Methods courses may also be targeted for specific grade levels, such as elementary or secondary grades. Methods courses help to build both content knowledge—what does intensive intervention look like in this content area—and pedagogical content—what are the best teaching strategies.

I Want My Preservice Teacher Candidates to...	NCII Resource	Course Suggestions
<p><b>Gain deep expertise of intensive intervention in a content area.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Intensive Intervention Course Content:</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Reading</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Mathematics</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Behavior Support</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Explicit Instruction</a></li> </ul>	<p>Incorporate course content resources into the design and delivery of content-specific methods courses. Candidates can complete modules independently or during class instruction. Each course offers the following materials that can be built into a semester-long course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Course Overview:</b> Serves as the foundation for a syllabus or class schedule.</li> <li>▪ <b>Standards Document:</b> Outlines the standards covered from the Council for Exceptional Children.</li> <li>▪ <b>Suggested Reading List:</b> Provides a bibliography of essential course reading materials.</li> <li>▪ <b>Slide Deck:</b> Includes module content with speaker notes that can be used in whole or in part during course lectures.</li> <li>▪ <b>Workbook:</b> Contains course activities, worksheets, and learning activities to practice content from the module.</li> <li>▪ <b>Videos:</b> Offers the same content from the slide deck and workbook delivered by an NCII expert.</li> </ul>

I Want My Preservice Teacher Candidates to...	NCII Resource	Course Suggestions
<b>Master lesson planning.</b>	Sample Lessons to Support Intensifying Intervention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Literacy</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Mathematics</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Behavior Strategies</a></li> </ul>	Candidates review, critique, and reflect on exemplar lesson plans that demonstrate how to intensify and individualize instruction in a content area. Candidates then create and deliver their own lesson plans, either to students or to their classmates. Include mechanisms for candidates to receive feedback and reflect on their performance.
<b>Understand the dimensions of intervention intensity.</b>	<a href="#">Overview of the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity</a> (self-paced module)	Assign the self-paced module as an independent learning activity to introduce or reinforce how the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity can be used to intensify an intervention for a student who has not responded to previous intervention delivered with fidelity.
	<a href="#">Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity Overview Handout</a>	Provide this two-page handout that summarizes the seven dimensions of the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity.
	<a href="#">Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity Training Materials</a>	Use the training materials to present examples of how the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity applies to reading, mathematics, and behavior interventions.

### Program Spotlight:

Candidates in the special education program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte take SPED 4272: Teaching Mathematics to Learners with Special Needs as a core methods course. Candidates complete an anchor assignment in which they investigate intensive interventions with whole number concepts and procedures. First, candidates learn about the concepts by watching selected portions of [Module 6: Whole-Number Content for Intensive Intervention](#) of the [Intensive Intervention in Mathematics Course](#). Next, candidates work in pairs to read through the scripted lesson in Activity 8 of Part 3, complete the evidence-based practice table, and use the Math Wise script to practice teaching to each other. Candidates record their mini-lesson and submit it to be evaluated against a rubric. Finally, candidates generalize their knowledge by evaluating the Council for Exceptional Children's [unedited video clips of teachers implementing high leverage practices](#) using the evidence-based practice table. Using their new knowledge of intensifying interventions in mathematics, candidates are asked to reflect on what could be done to intensify the lessons for students with Tier 2 and Tier 3 needs.

## Assessment Courses

In addition to methods courses, teacher candidates typically take courses about instructional assessment. Assessment courses may stand alone or connect to a content area (e.g., assessment in literacy, assessment in mathematics, etc.). Assessment courses introduce teacher candidates to essential concepts of data-based decision making, including progress monitoring and data analysis.

I Want My Preservice Teacher Candidates to...	NCII Resource	Course Suggestions
<p><b>Evaluate the technical adequacy of intervention platforms.</b></p>	<p>Intervention Tools Charts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Academic Interventions</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Behavioral Interventions</a></li> </ul>	<p>Candidates use the charts as a “consumer guide” to evaluate an existing intervention tool or select a new intervention tool for their instructional setting. Candidates must use information from the tools charts to provide rationale for their decisions.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity: Academic Rating Rubric</a></p>	<p>Candidates use the rating rubric to evaluate a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention program. If available, candidates could use information from the Intervention Tools Charts to justify their ratings.</p>
<p><b>Administer diagnostic assessments.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Example Diagnostic Tools</a></p>	<p>Candidates select a diagnostic assessment and administer it to one student. Candidates summarize the results, reflect on the administration process, and make instructional recommendations based on the data.</p>
<p><b>Set high-quality learning and behavior goals.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Goal Setting Tools:</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Strategies for Setting High-Quality Academic Individualized Education Program Goals</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Strategies for Setting Data-Driven Behavioral Individualized Education Program Goals</a></li> </ul>	<p>Candidates select a student and follow the steps in the brief to select a progress monitoring measure, establish baseline performance, choose a strategy for setting the goal, and write a measurable goal statement.</p>
<p><b>Analyze progress monitoring data.</b></p>	<p>Progress Monitoring Tools Charts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Academics</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Behavior</a></li> </ul>	<p>Candidates use the charts to select an appropriate progress monitoring tool for one student. Candidates create a progress monitoring plan using the information from the tools charts.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Student Progress Monitoring Tool for Data Collection and Graphing</a> (Excel)</p>	<p>Candidates conduct progress monitoring with a selected student and use the Excel-based tool to graph the resulting data.</p>

## Program Spotlight:

Candidates taking EDU 326: Assessment and Intervention in Literacy at Rhode Island College explore how DBI provides a framework for implementing and adapting Tier 2 interventions. In this course, candidates follow the steps of the DBI process to create a case study for two students. Candidates use both initial [screening tools](#) and reading [diagnostics](#) to determine the need for Tier 2 supports. After determining the specific area of need, candidates identify and implement appropriate reading supports and monitor student growth using aligned [progress monitoring tools](#). Candidates chart student growth, set goals based on normed criteria, and make quantitative adaptations to instruction. This semester-long case study assignment allows candidates to apply their knowledge of interventions and progress monitoring in the elementary school classroom practicum setting.

## Clinical or Practicum Courses

Most teacher candidates have a culminating experience at the end of their preparation program in the form of student teaching, an internship, a residency, or some other kind of practice-based experience. This clinical or practicum course gives teacher candidates opportunities to practice skills learned during their courses and receive systematic feedback and coaching support from a cooperating teacher and/or faculty supervisor.

I Want My Preservice Teacher Candidates to...	NCII Resource	Course Suggestions
<b>Create an intervention plan for a student.</b>	<a href="#">Intervention Plan (For Small Groups or Individual Students)</a>	Candidates use the template and the DBI framework to develop an individualized intervention plan for a student or a small group of students. Candidates implement the plan and use regular progress monitoring to document the results. This could become part of a semester-long case study or portfolio project in a clinical or practicum course.
<b>Create an intervention plan for a student.</b>	<a href="#">Clarifying Questions to Create a Hypothesis</a>	Candidates use the guiding questions to develop a hypothesis about why a struggling student is not responding to intervention. Candidates could use this activity in conjunction with the Intensification Strategy Checklist to intensify instruction for the student and assess the results.
	<a href="#">Intensification Strategy Checklist</a>	Candidates use this checklist to identify ideas to intensify interventions based on their hypothesis for why the student is not responding to intervention. Candidates can discuss these strategies with their cooperating teacher and/or faculty supervisor.



I Want My Preservice Teacher Candidates to...	NCII Resource	Course Suggestions
<b>Monitor fidelity of intervention delivery.</b>	<a href="#">Fidelity Tools</a>	Candidates use the intervention implementation log, meeting checklist, and/or student plan fidelity checklist to self-monitor the consistency of the delivery of their interventions in a clinical or practicum course. Cooperating teachers and/or faculty supervisors may also use these tools to monitor fidelity of intervention delivery.
<b>Evaluate schoolwide structures to support intensive intervention.</b>	<a href="#">DBI Implementation Rubric and Interview</a>	Candidates use the rubric to evaluate implementation of DBI within their clinical or practicum school setting. Candidates reflect on applicable indicators and offer evidence to justify their ratings. Candidates may also recommend ways to improve DBI implementation in the school.
	<a href="#">Data Teaming Tools</a>	Candidates observe, participate in, or lead school-level data meetings to discuss students needing intensive intervention. Candidates reflect on the processes and tools used.

### Program Spotlight:

During the culminating practicum experience at Providence College, candidates complete a four-part DBI intervention project with a case study student. First, candidates analyze, through observations and interviews, the current instructional practices used with the student. Then, candidates create an initial draft of an individualized comprehensive learning plan that includes baseline progress monitoring data. Next, candidates follow the steps of the DBI process to deliver the intervention, conduct progress monitoring, and adapt interventions as needed. As part of this process, candidates must identify and administer two diagnostic assessments (one formal and one informal) and provide materials for two sequential lessons in the student's identified area of need. Finally, based on data collected throughout the semester, candidates revise the student's individualized comprehensive learning plan, generate recommendations for future supports, and complete a reflective summary.



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