
After a year hiatus, this popular conference for educators is back in a new format and with lots to offer.

For over 40 years, professionals and practitioners in early childhood education have gathered each spring at the Early Childhood Conference (ECC) to explore the newest research findings, network with each other, and participate in exciting performances. The annual conference was canceled due to the pandemic in 2020, but conference organizers have redesigned the program in a new, virtual format that allows for just as much learning and networking, in a safe and highly flexible way.

The conference will take place on Canvas, and will include pre-recorded content along with live presentations by experts from across the country. Participants can access the materials throughout the month of April at a very affordable conference fee of just $59. Registry hours and academic credit are also available for conference participation.

Highlights of this year’s conference include a well-known keynote speaker and a screening of a documentary. Award-winning and best-selling author Holly Elissa Bruno will share leadership practices for educators to use as lighthouses during this pandemic storm. During the National Week of the Small Child, participants can view the documentary “No Small Matter,” the first documentary to lay out the evidence of the importance of the first five years and the everyday crisis that is happening in slow-motion for American families. Participants can then join Ann Terrell, president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in a discussion about the subject of the film.

“Our goal is to provide access to high-quality professional development sessions that educators can access at a time and place that is convenient for them,” conference coordinator Kristen Linzmeier says. “We are also pleased to offer this opportunity at a significantly reduced rate.”

For more information on this year’s conference visit the ECC website and follow along at the Facebook page for giveaways during the month-long conference.
Program Offers High School Students Options for Careers and Credentials

UW-W's dual enrollment program helps prepare high school students, while meeting the needs of many school districts.

Paraprofessionals are in great demand in many PK-12 school districts in Wisconsin. Department chair Amy Stevens (Special Education) wanted to address the shortage of highly qualified paraprofessionals by helping prepare high school students to enter the field after they graduate. Stevens recognized that many high school students don't fully understand the role of the paraprofessional and may not realize the profession could be a career option after high school and while they attend college.

Stevens identified the Introduction to Special Education course taught through UW-Whitewater’s Partners In Education (PIE) program as a starting point because paraprofessionals often work directly with students with disabilities. In the PIE program, a qualified high school instructor teaches a UW-W course in the high school setting. Stevens worked with Laura Montez, Educational Pathways Coordinator, on how PIE could work with her vision. Introduction to Human Development, another course offered through the PIE program, was chosen as the best way to ensure that students had the background they would need to work with PK-12 students. Finally, high school students would need to complete an experience working with students with special needs and complete an assessment to demonstrate their proficiency in reading, writing, and math.

Milton High School became the pilot school for the program and interest in the program has grown substantially since it has been launched. Stevens and Montez met with six additional schools looking to add the program. High school students who complete the requirements receive a credential from UW-W Continuing Education, and their school district reports their qualifications to the Department of Public Instruction. Upon graduation, these young adults are qualified for a position as a Special Education or Title 1 Paraprofessional in any district in Wisconsin. Those who choose to continue their education could transition to UW-W to complete their teaching degree or transfer their credits to another college or university. For those who would like to stay in their hometown and continue their studies either locally or online, they could work as a paraprofessional while they complete their associate of arts or science degree and then complete UW-W’s SPECED4U fully online special education teaching licensure program for their bachelor’s degree.
"This program gives young adults lots of options for careers and further education," Montez says. "It's great that UW-W can partner with local schools to give students these opportunities." In addition to helping students, the program also aims to benefit the state. "There is a critical shortage of paraprofessionals and special education teachers throughout Wisconsin" Stevens says. "We hope that this program will draw high school graduates into paraprofessional positions and eventually increase the number of educators in the state."

Laura Montez, Educational Pathways Coordinator
Amy Stevens, Chair, Special Education

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**History of Magic: From Alchemy to Witchcraft**

New course explores how human perceptions of magic have shaped our world today.

Magic is much more impactful to human societies than just Harry Houdini’s tricks or Harry Potter’s world. Magic has deep roots in popular culture, but it also has a rich history from herbology and astrology to mystical creatures and witchcraft. Its historical journey moves beyond imagination and into human perceptions and actions. Continuing Education’s new online course, [The History of Magic](#), will explore these topics and more through virtual lectures, primary source documents, and online discussions. This six-week class begins on March 15, and participants can join in whenever and where ever it is convenient and learn at their own pace. History professor Molly Patterson will guide us on a journey of magic and myth. Class opens on March 15. [Register](#) today!
Exploring Hmong Culture through the Big Read

Continuing Education is pleased to be a campus partner for the 2021 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read Program in Whitewater and surrounding communities. An Arts Endowment initiative in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. This year’s selection is The Latehomecomer by Kao Kalia Yang, a Hmong family memoir and tribute to the author’s grandmother whose spirit kept the family together during their journey as refugees from Laos to the United States. UW-Whitewater’s Young Auditorium is one of 84 organizations nationwide to win a Big Read grant, and 2021 will mark its ninth year hosting the program.

A wide variety of programing is scheduled for this spring. Continuing Education’s Fairhaven Lecture Series will feature a presentation by Nengher Vang (History) titled “Displacement, Nostalgia, and Hmong Homeland Politics: Hidden Legacies of America’s War in Laos” on April 5. A book discussion group for UW-W staff is also being sponsored by Continuing Education. For a full list of events, taking place virtually, on campus, and in the community, including a visit with the author, visit the Young Auditorium’s Big Read website.

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Misinformation, the Media and More: A Free Public Lecture

UW-Whitewater has partnered with the Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership to offer a free virtual lecture later this month. On Wednesday, March 30 at 7:00 p.m., Dr. Siva Vaidhyanathan will present "Cacophony: How Disinformation, Distraction, and the Heckler’s Veto Undermine Collective Thought" as part of the Thompson Talks series. This lecture will consider the importance of news and information literacy, which is fundamentally one of the most important issues of our time in an age when expertise and intellectualism is under attack.

A cultural historian, media scholar, and lecturer, Dr. Vaidhyanathan serves as the Robertson Professor of Media Studies and the director of the Center for Media and Citizenship at the University of Virginia. His current project reflects major societal concerns related to the "global media ecosystem," but touches on such issues as the prevalence of propaganda and misinformation which further threatens to undermine democracy and destabilize governments across the world. This high-profile lecture is thanks to a grant written by senior lecturer Anna Hajdik (Languages & Literatures). For more information and the link to this virtual lecture, visit the Thompson Center's website.
News and Upcoming Events:

ECE4U student Evelyn Cortes was recently featured in the Beloit Daily News as a recipient of the Grow Your Own Multicultural Teacher Scholarship Program. Cortes is a graduate of Beloit Memorial High School and is currently a junior at UW-W. The scholarship program is helping her pursue her dream of becoming a teacher and to give back to the teachers who helped her.

Help students graduate sooner! Summer Session courses are now open for registration. These three- or six-week classes are a great way to earn up to 12 credits over the summer and help students stay on track to earning their degree in four years. Open to any college student at UW-W or beyond, from incoming freshmen through graduate studies. Courses fill fast, especially the ones that are hardest to schedule during regular Fall and Spring terms. Learn more about all offerings this summer at our website.

As winter turns into spring, take advantage of the many events offered by Continuing Education. Well-known horticulturalist Mark Dwyer hosts one final gardening workshop on Container Gardening Basics and Beyond. Join us for a take and make Painting Plus Mixed Media Magic workshop on March 20. For the youth athletes, we have a session of Gymhawks Gymnastics, Men’s College Soccer Prep clinics, and Football clinics. Music lovers, be sure to check out Cello Fest. For a complete list of spring events, visit our website and join our mailing list to be the first to hear of our summer plans.
Are you thinking of a career advancement or change? Continuing Education offers advanced career training programs that lead to professional positions in high demand fields like certified pharmacy technician and freight broker/agent. Looking for individual classes? We have those too. Hundreds of flexible, affordable online classes with start dates each month, with titles like Marketing Your Business on the Internet and Speed Spanish will help you develop your skills and get ahead. Fun personal enrichment classes are available too!

UW-Whitewater cares deeply about the health and safety of our community. FREE COVID-19 testing is available to anyone over 5 years old. For more information on testing, reported cases, additional resources, and more, please visit the Warhawks Return webpage. Stay informed and stay safe!

Get tested. Help stop the spread.

Free, fast COVID-19 testing on campus for anyone age 5 or older.

uww.edu/warhawks-return/testing

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Continuing Education