

*George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Early Childhood Education Program*

EDSE 656/EDUT 512
Assessment of Diverse Young Learners
Fall 2009
Thursday 4:30-7:10 PM
School of Art Building, Room 2026

PROFESSOR (S):

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Course Description

Prerequisite: Admission to the Early Childhood Special Education program or permission of the instructor. Examines types of assessment, including family-centered assessment, used for planning and implementing effective programs for children from diverse cultures and with varied learning needs. Addresses selection, administration, and interpretation of formal and informal assessments. *Field Experience Required.*

Nature of Course Delivery

The class will have lecture, discussion, group work formats and will require active participation of all students. Guest lecturers from the community may be utilized to support content from readings.

Learner Outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to

1. Describe the forms, functions, methods, and roles of assessment for planning and implementing effective early childhood programs for young children ages three to five from diverse cultures and with varied learning needs.
2. Explore both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation and assessment.
3. Describe technological adaptations to enhance the assessment process.
4. Describe of appropriate strategies for conducting, reporting, and decision making related to specific functions of assessment.
5. Explain assessment strategies necessary for second language learners and about adaptations for children with disabilities and at-risk conditions and their families.
6. Use selected assessment strategies with young children in their field placements and become competent in the use of authentic assessment strategies to describe a child's learning strengths and instructional needs.
7. Administer, analyze, and interpret both formal and informal assessment techniques.

Professional Standards

This concentration is approved for licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia and it complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children. The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

- Standard 8 Assessment

Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement Competencies

- Knowledge of the selection, administration, and interpretation of formal and informal assessment techniques for young children with disabling and at-risk conditions and their families

Required Texts

Wortham, S. (2008). *Assessment in Early Childhood Education (5th ed.)*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Losardo, A. & Notari-Syverson, A. (2001). *Alternative Approaches to Assessing Young Children*. Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Recommended Resource:

Cohen, D., Stern, V., & Balaban, B. (2008). *Observing and recording the behavior of young children (5th ed.)*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Course Requirements**General Requirements**

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that graduate students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

Attendance

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the GMU library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>.

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

Grading Criteria

A = 95 – 100	A- = 90 – 94	B+ = 87 – 89	B = 83 – 86
B- = 80 – 82	C = 70 – 79	F = < 70	

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.

Grading Policy

Students in a graduate program must maintain a 3.000 GPA (B average). Endorsement coursework grades must be C or better for undergraduate courses, and B or better for graduate courses. Grades of B minus or better are required for all graduate-level education coursework for licensure. Students with a C or lower in a licensure course must re-take the course and earn a B minus or better to be recommended for Virginia licensure. Only two grades of C will be allowed for completion of the master's degree.

Submission of Performance-Based Assessment

This course has a Program Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) that **MUST** be uploaded and submitted to Task Stream for evaluation when the assignment is due. **Only PBAs posted to Task Stream will be graded.** This means that **NO** final grades will be posted until all materials are on Task Stream.

Description of Assignments:

Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.

- Students are actively involved in in-class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class discussions, activities, and written reflections.

Interest Preference Analysis (15 points)

Students are to select a target child and conduct two, three or four observations of that child. Consider selecting a child one is unfamiliar with and that has a different cultural background than his/her own. Students using their knowledge of observational strategies are to develop an observational protocol for documenting children's interests and preferences to guide their planning for a classroom. Students are to include the following components in the analysis:

1. Begin with an observation of 30 minutes in the classroom during free play.
2. Use an observational protocol developed by the student to record the data on the child's interests and preferences. Keep a record of activities, materials, spaces, events, play partners, etc. that seem to engage the child.
3. Compare the data obtained in step two. Look for shared interests and preferences. Discuss cultural, linguistic and ability factors.
4. In a written paper, describe what was learned, as well as, any limitations or need for further information. Discuss how the observations might help to plan for a group of children. Students will support their conclusions with references to class readings. The paper must include a description of how the information was collected (including the observation formats). Undergraduate students may use a published observation protocol for this project.

Due on: September 24th

Team Assessment Project (20 points)

The instructor will divide the class into two groups: Group A and Group B. In groups of three, **Group A will select a norm-referenced commercially published** test for use with children between the ages birth to five. In groups of three, **Group B will select a criterion-referenced commercially published** test for use with children between the ages birth to five.

1. Select a test and explore its use by administering different parts to your team members.
2. Each team member will administer the **entire** test to one child (preferably the target child) over more than one visit if needed. Request parental consent if it has not been previously obtained.
3. Each individual member will write a report summarizing the findings of the assessment. Include the scores, as well as, information on how the child responded.
4. As a **group** critically evaluate the assessment taking into consideration each of the following: each other's own perspective, the perspective of class readings, the perspective of cultural, linguistic and ability appropriateness, the perspective of usefulness for families, and one's experiences at the site.
5. As a group, prepare a written paper for the instructor, as well as an in-class presentation with a one-page reference handout for their classmates. The groups' task

is to provide classmates a working knowledge of the assessment from a critical perspective. Include the following information in the team paper:

- a. **Publication information.** Students will include title, publisher, recommended age range, stated purpose, scope, standardization, and stated limitations.
- b. **Description.** Students will describe how the assessment was normed, either a normed-referenced or criterion or curriculum referenced assessment, what they did and what they learned from administering the assessment.
- c. **Critical analysis.** Students will give their general reaction. What did they see as strengths, and/or limitations of the assessment? Students will support their position with information from the readings, class discussion, and their experience on site. In particular, they will evaluate the assessment for cultural and linguistic bias, as well as for appropriate use for children with disabilities, and for the appropriateness and usefulness of the assessment for families.

In class, each team will present a 15-minute presentation on the assessment and share their experiences.

Due on: October 15th

Formal Assessment Used with Preschool Children and Written Report (20 points)

Students in **Group A** will use a **criterion-referenced assessment** and students in **Group B** will use a **norm-referenced assessment** to assess one child, preferably the targeted child. The child selected must be between the ages of birth to five years. Request parental consent if it has not been previously obtained. Students will complete the test during at least two separate sessions with the child. Students will complete the following steps:

1. Select either a norm or criterion-referenced test to administer.
2. Familiarize oneself with the test's protocol.
3. Administer the test to the selected child.
4. Interpret the findings and summarize the information. Be sure to include test scores and descriptions of each domain.
5. Write a formal written report that includes the parent's view of the child's development and the setting in which the test took place. Compare the findings obtained from the normed-referenced or criterion-referenced test used in the Team Assessment Project. Integrate the results of both tests.
6. Reflect on the experience of administering the two tests, how one felt as the assessor/evaluator, as well as, what one would do differently in the future.

Due on: November 5th

Individual Child/Study Portfolio (30 points)

Students will study and practice formal and informal assessment strategies with a child between the ages of birth to five years. The result of this experience will be the development of a child portfolio containing selected materials to support the students' written description of what they learned about the child, as well as an interpretation of the materials gathered.

1. Successfully complete the Team Assessment Project (assignment #2).

2. Successfully complete Formal Assessment Used with Preschool Children and Written Report (assignment #3).
3. Select a target child and obtain permission from his/her parent to study and practice assessment strategies with his/her child.
4. Observe the child a minimum of two or three times for 15-20 minutes and record anecdotal observations. Consider doing the observations when visiting to test the child in the earlier assignments.
5. Select appropriate technology to individualize the assessment process. Document the child's best performance.
6. Students will need to talk with, or interview, a parent to gain his/her insight and perspective of the child's development in all domains.
7. Collect a minimum of two work samples in three to five different developmental areas.
8. Students are to select and provide a rationale on how they organized their portfolio contents. Students are expected to incorporate information from other assignments when appropriate.
9. Compile the portfolio to include the following sections:
 - **Annotated Table of Contents:** This section of the portfolio should be reader friendly, enabling readers to find materials easily. The table of contents should make it clear to the reader that materials have been organized carefully and logically. Annotations should provide a brief overview about each section included in the portfolio.
 - **Narrative:** Prepare a narrative to accompany the portfolio that includes the following:
 - A brief summary of the portfolio contents
 - A description of and rationale for the approach that was taken to build the portfolio, including all sources of information; classroom, home, play, etc.
 - A description of the child, including observations of all key domains of development, *including emergent literacy*
 - A discussion of what was learned about the child, implications for teaching, and implications for collaborating with the child's family
 - A discussion of how impressions will be validated with the family
 - A critique of the approach and what might be changed the next time
 - **Summary and recommendation:** Students will prepare a summary of their portfolio to share with classmates and faculty. This section should include a discussion of implications of one's findings for classroom planning with recommendations and analysis. It should be reflective of the child as a learner and provide an understanding of how one integrated the knowledge one gained to provide an improved educational program for the child. How would one use the results of the portfolio assessment to develop and implement individual instruction? Based on the findings of the portfolio what are one's recommendations for monitoring the child's progress over the course of the year?
 - **Reflection and recommendation:** Students will upon completion of the above tasks write a postscript of two pages in which they discuss the process of creating their portfolio from their perspective. What was learned in the process? What are the legal and ethical principles that were considered in developing the portfolio? What would one change or do differently?

Prepare a complete paper for the instructor. In class, students are required to do an individual 15-minute presentation to share their findings. Bring work samples of the child to the presentation.

Due on: December 3rd /December 10th

All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Note: To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to www.gmu.edu.

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
Sept 3	Introduction to Assessment Overview of Class, Review of Syllabus	NAEYC on Assessment
Sept 10	Informal Assessment Collecting and Recording Data	Wortham Ch 5-6
Sept 17	Why, What and When to Asses Legal, Ethical & Professional Responsibilities	Wortham Ch 1-2
Sept 24	Observation Techniques	Losardo/Notari-Syverson Ch 4-5 <i>Interest Preference Analysis Due</i>
Oct 1	Formal Assessment Norm and Criterion Referenced Tests	Wortham Ch 3-4
Oct 8	Introduction to authentic assessment and portfolio Review Norm and Criterion Referenced Tests	Wortham Ch 8 Losardo/Notari-Syverson Ch 1-2
Oct 15	Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the Assessment Process	Class readings/Team Presentations <i>Team Assessment Written Paper Due</i>
Oct 22	Portfolio Development and Assessment Use of Technology in the Assessment Process	Wortham Ch 9 Losardo/Notari-Syverson Ch 6
Oct 29	Portfolio Development and Assessment	Losardo Ch 3
Nov 5	Summarizing and interpreting assessment information Discuss Portfolio Progress	Losardo Ch 9 <i>Formal Assessment Written Report Due</i>
Nov 12	Collaborating with Families to Promote Meaningful Assessments	Wortham Ch 10
Nov 19	Teacher Design Strategies/Dynamic Assessment Special Topics in Assessment	Wortham Ch 7 Losardo/Notari-Syverson Ch 7
Dec 3	Presentations on Individual Child Study	<i>Individual Child Study Portfolio Due</i>
Dec 10	Presentations on Individual Child Study	<i>Individual Child Study Portfolio Due</i>

Dec 17	Performance Based Assessment Upload Bring laptops	PBA must be uploaded and verified by class instructor
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