**EDCI 520 - Section 001**  
*Assessment of Language Learners [***NEW Name***]*  
**SPRING 2005**

**Saturdays, 9:00 - 3 p.m.**  
**Innovation Hall, Room 137**

**Professor**  
Dr. Lorraine Valdez Pierce  
Coordinator, ESOL Teacher Licensure Program  
*Ph.D., Georgetown University, Applied Linguistics*  
12 years in GSE, Tenured 1998

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**Office**  
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Thurs., 5 - 6 p.m. and by appointment

**URGENT Messages/Absences**  
TEL: (703) 993-2050  
FAX: (703) 993-3336

**NON-Urgent Messages**  
Email: lpierce@gmu.edu

**Prerequisites**

CISL (ESL) and CIFL (Foreign Language) candidates in the Initial Licensure program must have completed all licensure courses, including EDCI 790 Teaching Internship prior to taking this course. CIMM candidates are required to have completed at least EDCI 516 and EDCI 519. If you do not meet these criteria, please talk to me after class.

**Course Description**

This graduate course provides an introduction to basic principles and current and innovative approaches to **classroom-based assessment of language learning students in ESL, bilingual education, foreign language, and grade-level classrooms in Grades PreK-12, Adult Education, and University programs.** The principles introduced in this course are also applicable to native speakers of English in general education classrooms.

Among the topics addressed are: applying research on language acquisition and teaching to instruction and assessment; embedding assessment of oral language, reading, and writing in daily instruction to monitor student progress; setting assessment purpose; ensuring reliability and validity; scaffolding assessments in the content areas;
designing and using portfolios; using assessment as feedback for learning; developing scoring rubrics and other performance-based assessments; engaging students in peer and self-assessment; improving grading practices; reviewing language proficiency tests; writing multiple-choice tests; using criterion-referenced vs. norm-referenced testing; and preparing students to take standardized tests.

Graduate students will have opportunities to both critically examine assessment tools used in current practice and to develop their own. This course is required for ESL endorsement of teachers who are already licensed and for the M.Ed. component for licensure candidates. It meets or exceeds NCATE, TESOL and ACTFL Standards for Teacher Preparation in assessment.

Course Objectives*

Teachers/graduate students completing EDCI 520 will be able to:

1. **Link assessment to instruction** by designing a variety of assessments that are embedded within instructional activities;

2. **Critically examine and develop assessment procedures and tools** for (a) the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and (b) the content areas;

3. **Add scaffolding to assessment and instruction** for language learners and at-risk learners;

4. **State the importance of feedback for language learning and provide feedback** to students that promotes language learning;

5. **Draft clear and objective performance criteria** for language learning;

6. **Design a student assessment portfolio** and involve learners in self-assessment;

7. **Critically review language proficiency assessment measures** for validity, reliability, and cultural bias, and make recommendations for use with English and foreign language learning students (and native speakers of English);

8. **Prepare language learning students to take standardized tests** and high-stakes statewide assessments.

9. **Compare purposes, advantages, and limitations** of standardized achievement tests to those of alternative assessments and compare purposes, advantages, and limitations of standardized achievement tests to those of alternative assessments; and

10. **Define concepts and terminology** used in traditional assessment and evaluation and in innovative approaches to assessment.
*Students will be asked to use a personal computer for preparing course requirements and for engaging in dialogue with the instructor and classmates through email.

**Instructional approaches include:** Whole class mini-lectures and demonstrations, workshops, small group and peer feedback sessions, field projects, videos, and homework assignments for applying principles discussed in texts and class. *Interacting in meaningful ways with other grad students/teachers during each class session is essential for success in this course.* **Student reports and projects will be evaluated** using performance-based, criterion-referenced scoring rubrics.

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**GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations/Behaviors/Attitudes**

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that *all students* abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional *behavior and dispositions*. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the *University Honor Code*. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for *Responsible Use of Computing*. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing 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 www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
Course Requirements*

1. Scaffolding Project  30%  Add scaffolding to assessment tools (due Week 3)
2. Field Project **  35%  Design & pilot-test an assessment tool; analyze current practice & make recommendations; administer & critique a standardized test  (due Week 5)
3. Final Project**  35%  Draft a new or revised assessment prototype (due Week 8)

* If you need access to students in a classroom setting to conduct your Field Project, you can either join a teacher in this class or see me to make arrangements no later than the third week of class.

**Either the Field Project or the Final Project can be conducted in teams of up to 3 class members.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS: PLEASE SEE ME FOR DOCTORAL LEVEL REQUIREMENTS.

Textbooks
All books have been ordered through the GMU Bookstore.

Required


Additional Required Readings available either online or in class.

Optional


## Class Schedule

Prepare to discuss the assigned readings during the week in which they appear.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/ Date</th>
<th>Topics &amp; Assigned Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>O'Malley &amp; Valdez Pierce, Chs. 1-2; Hughes, Chs. 1-3 &amp; 6</td>
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<td>Readings</td>
<td>O'M &amp; VP, Ch. 3; Hughes, Ch. 6</td>
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<td>3 2/26</td>
<td>Assessment of oral language. Setting criteria. Steps to designing a scoring rubric. EXPLODING a scoring rubric. <strong>Assessment Toolbox Workshop.</strong>  <strong>Bring samples of oral language assessments to class for peer feedback.</strong></td>
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<td>Readings</td>
<td>O'M &amp; VP, Ch. 4; Hughes, Chs. 4-5 &amp; 12</td>
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<td>Assessment of reading. What works in reading instruction. Implications for assessment. Matching purpose to task. Assessing reading strategies. <strong>Bring samples of reading assessments to class for peer feedback.</strong></td>
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<td>Readings</td>
<td>O'M &amp; VP, Ch. 5; Hughes, Ch. 11</td>
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*Video: Reading Assessment.*

**Readings**  
*O’M & VP, Ch. 5; Hughes, Chs. 14-15*

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**Bring first draft of Field Project (sample assessment tools used) for Peer Feedback.**

*Readings*  
*O’M & VP, Ch. 6; Hughes, Ch. 9*

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Assessment in the content areas. Scaffolding, visible criteria, and differentiated scoring. Content area standards. Common testing techniques. Grading policies. Converting rubrics into grades.  

**Bring samples of content area assessments for peer feedback.**

*Readings*  
*O’M & VP, Chs. 7, 2 (pp. 29-31), Hughes, Chs. 7-8*

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Recent Federal assessment requirements (ESEA/NCLB, 2001). Statewide testing programs and ELLs. Ethics and accountability.  

**First draft due of Final Project for Peer Feedback.**

*Readings*  

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<td>5/7</td>
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Writing Multiple-Choice Test items. Test-taking Skills. Preparing students to take standardized tests.  

*Readings*  
*Hughes, Ch._*
In Memoriam: J. Michael O’Malley

I would like to express gratitude for my friend, mentor, and co-author, Mike O’Malley, for his faith in me and his support of my work. Mike was a prolific writer and a tireless researcher of assessment, evaluation, and learning strategies. Most importantly, Mike was my greatest teacher. I first met Mike in 1980, when he hired me as a research assistant on a national teacher language proficiency survey. Mike always made time to help graduate students and teachers who wanted to know more about assessment and learning strategies. He was humble and generous with all who approached him.

On April 11, 1998, Mike passed away after a five-month battle with cancer. Words cannot express my profound sense of loss. I am thankful for having had Mike in my life, and I will continue to work for the mission we both embraced – fair and equitable assessment practices for English language learners and language minority students everywhere.

LVP

“...assessment should be deliberately designed to improve and educate student performance, not merely to audit it as most school tests currently do.”

“...it is only through authentic assessment that real validity can be obtained.”
Jim Cummins in O’Malley & Valdez Pierce, Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners, p.iv, 1996.

“Perhaps no American institution has been reformed more often, with less apparent effect, than the school.”

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