EDCI 520 - Section 001
Assessment of Language Learners
Spring 2006

Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m. Robinson Hall A, Room 243

Professor
Dr. Lorraine Valdez Pierce
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Ph.D., Georgetown University, Applied Linguistics
13 years at GMU, Tenured 1998

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Robinson Hall A, 3rd floor, Room 319

Office Hours
Tues., 7:30 – 8:30 p.m., Alternating Saturdays, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., and by appointment

URGENT/Same Day Messages
TEL: (703) 993-2050

NON-Urgent Messages
Email: lpierce@gmu.edu
FAX: (703) 993-3336

Course Prerequisites
Candidates admitted to the CISL, CIFL, and CIMM degree programs are required to have completed at least EDCI 516 and EDCI 519. If you have not yet completed the prerequisites or are not in any of these programs, please let me know.

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 both ESL and Foreign Language teacher licensure as well as for the endorsement of teachers who are already licensed. It meets or exceeds NCATE, TESOL and ACTFL Standards for Teacher Preparation in assessment.

Course Objectives*

*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 principles:

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

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

3. 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.

4. 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.

**Inclement Weather/Emergency Policy**

*In case of snow, hurricanes, other bad weather, or security emergencies, call 993-1000 or go to** www.gmu.edu for information on class cancellations and university closings.
EDCI 520- Assessment  L. Valdez Pierce  
SPRING 2006  Course Syllabus 

George Mason University  Graduate School of Education  

Course Requirements* 

1. Scaffolding Project  30%  Add scaffolding to assessment tools  
(due Week 5) 
2. Field Project **  35%  Design & pilot-test an assessment tool; analyze current practice & make recommendations; administer & critique a standardized test  
(due Week 10) 
3. Final Project**  35%  Draft a new or revised assessment prototype (due Week 15) 

* 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 Texts 


Additional Required Readings available either online or in class. 

Recommended Texts (not Required) 


Class Schedule  
George Mason University  Graduate School of Education
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topics &amp; Assigned Readings</th>
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**Readings** O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, Chs. 1-2; Hughes, Chs. 1-3 & 6  
**DEMO: Portfolio Planning Workshop.**  
**Readings** O'M & VP, Ch. 3; Hughes, Ch. 6 |
| 4 2/14 | Assessment of oral language. Setting criteria. Steps to designing a scoring rubric. EXPLODING a scoring rubric. **Assessment Toolbox Workshop.**  
**Bring samples of oral language assessments to class for peer feedback.**  
**Readings** O'M & VP, Ch. 4; Hughes, Chs. 4-5 & 12 |
**Demo:** Information Gap. **Video:** Fresh Start Interviews. **ASCD Video: Dev. Perf. Tasks** (if time).  
**Readings** Hughes, Ch. 10 |
| 6 2/28 | Assessment of reading. What works in reading instruction. Implications for assessment. Matching purpose to task. Assessing reading strategies. **Bring samples of reading assessments to class for peer feedback.**  
**Readings** O'M & VP, Ch. 5; Hughes, Ch. 11 |
**Readings** O'M & VP, Ch. 5; Hughes, Chs. 14-15 |
<p>| 8 3/14 | SPRING BREAK/TESOL Convention: NO CLASS |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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**Readings**  
O’M & VP, Ch. 6; Hughes, Ch. 9 |
**Readings**  
O’M & VP, Ch. 6; Hughes, Ch. 13 |
| 11   | 4/4  | Teaching students how to engage in reflection, SELF-ASSESSMENT, and PEER ASSESSMENT. Involving students in setting criteria. Swimming placement. **Self-Assessment Workshop. ASCD Video: Self- and Peer Assessment.**  
**Readings**  
O’M & VP, Ch. 3 |
| 12   | 4/11 | Assessment in the content areas. 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 |
| 13   | 4/18 | Assessment of language learners and learning disabilities. What does appropriate assessment look like?  
**Readings**  
Each student locates one professional journal article or book on this topic, brings it to class to discuss, and emails title and bibliographical citation to the class. |
**Readings**  
O’Malley & Valdez Pierce (1994) “State assessment policies...”;  
Amrein & Berliner (2002) “High-stakes testing, uncertainty, and student learning”  
[http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n18](http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n18)  
Black & Wiliam (1998) “Inside the Black Box...”  
[http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm](http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kbla9810.htm)  
[http://www.pdkintnl.org/kappan](http://www.pdkintnl.org/kappan)  
Hughes, Ch. 8 |
“...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.”

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

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

*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