

**George Mason University**  
**Graduate School of Education**  
**Assessment of Diverse Young Learners, Ages 3 to 5**  
**EDSE 656 Section 01**  
**Spring 2005**

**Instructor:** Stephanie R. Kent, MA

**Class Date and Time:** Thursday 4:30PM to 7:10PM

**Class Location:** Robinson Hall B Room 220

**Contact Information and Office Hours:** Office Hours by Appointment

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**Course Description:** This course provides students with an understanding of the forms, functions, methods and roles of assessment for planning and implementing effective early childhood programs for young children aged three to five from diverse cultures and with varied learning needs. The students will learn to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluation and assessment. They will also learn about technological adaptations to enhance the assessment process. Students will gain an understanding of appropriate strategies for conducting, reporting and decision making related to specific functions of assessment. They will learn about assessment strategies necessary for second language learners and about adaptations for children with disabilities. They will use selected assessment strategies with young children and are expected to become more competent in the use of authentic assessment strategies to describe a child's learning strengths and instructional needs.

Prerequisite: Admission to the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University.

**Student Outcomes and Professional Standards:**

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the various forms and functions of assessment used with young children. (NAEYC 3: CEC CC8K 1-4; CEC EC8S2)
2. Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of authentic assessment strategies to learn about a child and plan for group and individual instruction. (NAEYC 1.3;CEC CC7S13, 8S1, 8S2, 8S3; CEC EC8S1)
3. Demonstrate the ability to incorporate a variety of assessment strategies into the daily routine in order to document learning and developmental progress and to adjust teaching. (NAEYC 3; CEC CC7S4, 8S5)
4. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and adapt the assessment process to ensure family and cultural relevance, to reduce language bias, and to reduce the impact of disability on assessment. (NAEYC1,2,3,4a; CEC CC7S3, 8S1, 8S4, 8S6)
5. Report assessment results in a manner that is relevant for family members and other staff and that highlights children's strengths and capacities. (NAEYC 2,3,4a; CEC CC8S5, 8S7, EC8S3-6)
6. Demonstrate the ability to integrate multiple assessment sources to derive a complete picture of a child's capacities and needs.
7. Demonstrate the ability to develop and maintain an ongoing system for documenting children's progress in the classroom context. (NAEYC 3; CEC CC8S9)

**Nature of Course Delivery:**

This course is taught using lectures, discussions, case studies and field experiences.

## Required Texts

McAfee, O. & Leong, D. (2002). *Assessing and Guiding Young Children's Development and Learning (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Helm, J. & Beneke, S. & Steinheimer, K (1998). *Windows on Learning: Documenting Young Children's Work*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Puckett, M. & Black, J. (2000). *Authentic Assessment of the Young Child: Celebrating Development and Learning (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

## Course Requirements

Students will be expected to:

1. Attend class sessions and actively participate in small and large group activities.
2. Complete all written assignments in a timely fashion. It is expected that assignments be turned in on the due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. A pattern of late papers will affect grading.

## Possible Evaluation Schema

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|---|-----|
| 1. Participation and preparation for class  | 10% |
| Attend all classes (on time); participate in class discussions and activities; demonstrate knowledge of assigned readings and site experiences; complete all assignments on time unless prior arrangements are made |     |
| 2. Interest Preference Analysis   | 10% |
| 3. Team Assessment Project  | 20% |
| 4. Individual Child Portfolio and presentation  | 40% |
| 5. Formal Assessment and Written Report   | 20% |

**Grading Scale:** A = 96-100

A- = 90-95

B+ = 86-89

B = 80-85

C = 70-79

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

All students must abide by the following:

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu).

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [gsu.gmu.edu](http://gsu.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions.

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](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

**Tentative Class Schedule  
Topics and Reading Assignments**

Jan 27	Overview of Class; Review of Syllabus Defining Assessment; Group Assignments	In class Reading
Feb 3	Why, What and When to Assess; Legal, Ethical and Professional Responsibilities	Mcafee and Leong Chap 1-3 Puckett & Black Chap 1
Feb 10	Intro to Portfolios & alternative assessments Tests and Test Development	Helm et al Chap5-6 Puckett & Black Ch 7 McAfee Chap 10
Feb 17	Methods of Collecting Info; contexts for assessment Choosing Appropriate Assessments; recording subjective Vs objective	Mcaffee Chap 4-6
Feb 24	Linguistical diversity in the Assesment Process Guest Speaker <b>Formal Assessment and written report due</b>	Puckett Ch 4 &9
Mar 3	Assessment in Action Examining information collected so far for your portfolio	Helm Chap 7-9
Mar 10	Resiliency as a factor in assessment Guest Speaker	
Mar 17	<b><i>SPRING BREAK no class</i></b>	
Mar 24	Interpreting & Using Assessment info How can assessment info be used to for class planning <b>Interest Preference Analysis due</b>	McAfee Chap 7-9 Puckett Chap 5
Mar 31	<b><i>Group Project Meeting Time No class</i></b>	
Apr 7	Linking Assessment in the Big Picture Panel Discussion of the Child Find Process	
Apr 14	<b>Team Assessment Presentations Due</b>	

Apr 21	<b>Team Assessment Presentations Due</b>	
Apr 28	Assessment and the IEP process	In class readings
May 5	Poster Session of portfolios <b>Individual Child Portfolio due</b>	

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

##### **1. Formal Assessment Used with Preschool Children and Written Report: (20%)**

Each student will select one child to assess using one norm referenced instrument and one criterion or curriculum referenced instrument. The child you select may be the child you are using for the portfolio assignment. You will complete the assessments during at least two separate sessions with the child. Submit a formal written report that integrates the results of both assessments. The report must include parental concerns re: the child's development and the settings in which the assessment took place, assessment results and recommendations for facilitating the child's development. Also include a reflection of how you felt you did as an assessor/evaluator; what would you do differently etc.

**Due: February 24**

##### **2. Interest Preference Analysis: (10%)**

Using your knowledge of observational strategies, develop a format for noting children's interests and preferences to guide your planning for the classroom. Keep a record of activities, materials, spaces, events, play partners etc that seem to engage children. Look for shared interests and preferences. Discuss cultural, linguistic and ability factors. In a paper, describe what you learned and discuss how your observations might help you plan for a group of children. Support your conclusions with references to class readings. Your paper must include a description of how you gathered the information (include the observation formats) and any limitations or further information needs.

**Due: March 24**

##### **3. Team Assessment Project: (20%)**

In small groups of four, select a commercially published assessment indicated for use with children aged three to five. Read the manual and instructions carefully. Try the assessment out with each other, with children you know and at your site. Critically evaluate the assessment from your own perspective, from the perspective of class readings, from the perspective of cultural, linguistic and ability appropriateness, from the perspective of usefulness for families and from your experience. As a group, prepare a written product and inclass presentation. Your task is to give your classmates a working knowledge of this assessment from a critical perspective. Include the following information:

- a. Publication information. Title, publisher, recommended age range, stated purpose, scope, standardization and stated limitations.
- b. Description of what you did and what you learned from administering the assessment.
- c. Critical analysis. Give your general reaction. What do you see as strengths, limitations of the assessment? Support your position with information from the readings, class discussions, your experiences. In particular, evaluate the assessment for cultural and linguistic bias, as well as appropriate use for children with disabilities and for appropriateness and usefulness of the assessment for families.

- d. Supporting information. Locate at least three articles out of current journals that may be relevant to this assessment. Provide complete citations and discuss the relevance of these articles to your understanding of the particular instrument you chose. If at all possible, interview professionals and parents about their impressions of the assessment.

**Prepare a complete paper for the instructor and a reference handout for all of your classmates. In class you will do at least a 30 minute presentation on the assessment and your experiences.**

**DUE: April 14 and April 21**

#### **4. Individual Child Portfolio and Poster: (40%)**

You will study and practice formal and informal assessment strategies with a child between the ages of 3 and 5 years of age. Select a child between the ages of 3 and 5 years of age and receive permission from a parent to study and practice assessment strategies with their child. You will need to talk with or interview a parent as part of this process so you also need to make this clear. Begin to develop your portfolio and compile materials. You will bring your compiled materials to class to share at points of the semester and you will also be working on ways to organize the portfolio contents. Be prepared to provide rationale for the way you have chosen to organize your portfolio.

Compile the materials you have accumulated and develop a portfolio for the child you have been studying. Note that you can and should incorporate info from other assignments when appropriate. The final product must 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 you have organized materials carefully and logically. Annotations should provide a brief overview about each section included in the portfolio.
- **Introductory Narrative:** Prepare a narrative to accompany the portfolio. Include a description of the approach you took to building the portfolio, including all sources of information—classroom, home, play; rationale for the approach; brief summary of the portfolio contents and a description of the child.
- **Portfolio Contents:** The actual sections of the portfolio with accompanying documents which will be specified as we proceed through the class.
- **Summary:** This section should include a discussion of implications of your findings for classroom planning with recommendations and analysis. It should be reflective of the child as a learner and provide an understanding of how you integrate the knowledge you have gained to provide an improved educational program for the child. Be sure to include what you have seen in all key domains of development; discussion of what you have learned about the child, including instructional content/techniques that might be effective; implications of teaching and implications for collaborating with the child's family. Give specific examples to support and illustrate your points.
- **Post Script:** When you have finished all the above tasks, please write a post script of two or more pages in which you discuss the process of creating your portfolio. What was most surprising to you about the process? What was hard? What was easy? What did you learn in the process? What would you change or do differently?

Develop a poster that tells about the child you assessed and presents a sampling of the material in your portfolio. Bring the poster and the completed portfolio to class.

**DUE: May 5 (Portfolio 30 points; poster 10 points)**

