George Mason University – Graduate School of Education
EDUC 674
“Assessing Learning and Teaching in Secondary School”

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Prerequisite: Completion of the teacher licensure coursework for the Secondary Education Program [EDUC522 and 672, and EDCI5xx and 6xx methods].

Course Description and Relationship to Program Goals: EDUC 674 is a graduate course that supports beginning teachers’ development and design of assessment practices for promoting student learning. The course focuses on the individual differences and classroom, teacher, school, and cultural factors that impact assessment; different types and purposes of assessment; and the relationship of assessment to national and state standards. Teachers enrolled in the course will integrate their knowledge from the licensure courses and classroom practices, to understand, develop, and implement assessment strategies. This course focuses on implementing state and national standards for assessing teaching and learning in the content areas as outlined by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). EDUC674 introduces teachers to ideas and methods they will need to complete action research in EDUC 675.

Course Objectives:
• Plan formal and informal assessments of student understanding of content area knowledge identified in state and national standards;
• Design and construct assessment instruments;
• Create multiple formats and strategies of assessment to target the diverse nature of learning in students and to encourage a variety of ways to exhibit understanding;
• Create and/or reformat scoring rubrics that will be used to evaluate student work;
• Defend assessment plans using the research on teaching and learning;
• Consider how the integration of subject matter across disciplines impacts assessment;
• Examine the role of technology in classroom assessment and practice; and
• Reflect on teaching practice to develop professional skills.

Texts (all required):

National Standards in your discipline (NCSS, NCTE, NCTM, NSTA).

Supplies:
Computer with Internet access and current GMU email account.

Online Resources:
- National Assessment of Educational Progress: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/
- TIMSS Achievement Items: http://www.timss.org/TIMSS1/items.html

Course Delivery:
In addition to classroom attendance and participation, students are expected to complete readings, whole class and small group discussions, group, pair, and individual projects, internet research, analyses of case studies, and reflections on practice. GMU’s web-accessible BlackBoard course framework will be used regularly throughout the course (familiarity with BlackBoard is expected).

Grades:
Since this is a professional development course (post licensure), high quality work (i.e., “A” work) is expected on all assignments and in class participation. All assignments must be completed to successfully complete the course. Each graded assignment will be assessed using a scoring rubric, created by the class, and known to the student. For full consideration, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are due, unless otherwise announced.

Written and Oral Assignments:
All written assignments are to be word-processed. Many of them will be posted to a BlackBoard / “Discussion Board” / “FORUM”. On the cover page include your name(s), course title, project title, date, and as appropriate describe the target student population including the grade level, subject, and unit of study. If assignment is to be done on paper, attach all pages in one assignment together by stapling or placing in a binder or folder as appropriate. Make each project something that you could eventually use in your teaching. All oral presentations/oral reports need to be professional, and should include effective use of media/technology and stay within the time frame allocated for the presentation/oral report.
I. Attendance/Participation (30% of grade). Attendance at all classes, for the entire class period, is a course expectation. Attendance at each class meeting is required and absence will affect the grade. Being on time is essential and lateness will affect the grade. If you miss the equivalent of more than one class session you should see the instructor about dropping the class. Participation in discussions related to three case studies are integral to the theory/practice connections that will be made throughout this course. The participation rubric and point system will be used to assess in class and online participation.

II. Philosophy of Assessment (20% of grade). You will write a 3-5 page paper that serves as your philosophy of assessment. You should use knowledge of all your licensure course work, readings, and classroom experience to address your beliefs about assessment. Your philosophy of assessment must incorporate references to the INTASC standards. The paper should express (1) your philosophy of assessment, (2) examples of what you intend to do or have done with success, and (3) research to support your opinions and plans {along with references to INTASC}. This paper should be included in your portfolio* and will be used as a major reflective piece in the graduate portfolio. The scoring rubric for this assignment will be developed in class.

III. Interdisciplinary Assessment Project and Presentation (25% of grade). Your school has decided to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of subjects. Therefore, all teachers have been asked to work with teachers in other disciplines at the same grade level to develop an interdisciplinary project for their students including an assessment plan for the project. The project could be an intensive interdisciplinary activity that spans one unit of study or the whole year. You will work in an interdisciplinary team (4-5 students) to:

- identify a topic/theme (e.g., equity or justice) that will meaningfully support interdisciplinary teaching of your subjects; i.e., language arts and mathematics, including essential questions;
- determine the Standards of Learning and national standards that match up with the topic in all subjects;
- outline a curriculum unit which sets the content and context for assessment;
- describe all support materials necessary to implement the project with your students;
- create assessment instruments for the culminating project in the unit;
- design rubrics for assessment of the culminating project;
- justify the design of assessment instruments and rubrics using research and theory and link your assessment instruments to your essential questions; and
- present your project and assessment plan to the class in 20 minutes.

You will create all assessment instruments and rubrics needed to introduce and end this project with students. You will turn in the transparencies and handouts used in your presentation and all student handouts, assessment instruments, and rubrics including your design rationale. The rationale should include research and theory, such as levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and selection of learning styles, reasons for the culminating activity and its’ assessment, and arrangement of questions/activities within the unit. Each group will be given a grade for this assignment based on each listed aspect of the project and
their collaborative effort. The scoring rubric for this assignment will be developed in class.

**IV. Individual Assessment Project and Report** (25% of grade). Students will work collaboratively in dyads with another student in their subject area to design the assessment plan for a unit of instruction. Each teacher will identify a topic and corresponding standards they will (may) be teaching during the school year. Students will use Wiggins “Backwards Design Model” to create all assessment instruments and rubrics to use with the students participating in the unit. This project can be a unit you will use later in your teaching career. Please plan accordingly.

NOTE: This is considered to be an *individual* project, but one of your most valuable planning and design references is the other teacher you are paired up with. You should use this teacher as a sounding board, as a reviewer, a critic, a friend. Conversely, you need to be a sounding board, reviewer, critic, a friend, etc.

Although you worked collaboratively with a partner on this project, each of you will submit your own written/oral report and grades will be assigned individually. The scoring rubric for this assignment will be developed in class.

**Written Report:** Each student will complete a written report with a conceptual overview and the sections that follow.

1. The conceptual overview includes topic and essential questions, corresponding state and national standards, acceptable results (e.g., 80% mastery), evidence of learning, outline of curriculum unit and assessment plan.
2. **Diagnostic assessment instrument and rubric, including justification using research and theory.**
3. **Formative assessment instruments and rubrics, including justification using research and theory.** [A variety of formative assessment instruments and rubrics should be used to assess the developing understanding of secondary students while the unit is being taught. Both formal and informal instruments (graded and non-graded instruments for student and class assessment) should be used for formative assessment. Multiple short assessments work best.]
4. **Summative assessment instrument and rubric, including justification using research and theory.** [The summative assessment is the one you will use to assess student learning at the end of the unit.]
5. **Confirmatory assessment instrument and rubric, including justification using research and theory.** [Confirmatory assessment is assessment done well after the unit of study is complete, such as at the end of the school year. This assessment will help you find out what knowledge the students retain, long term, about the topic.]

**All assessment instruments and rubrics should be submitted in photocopy ready format for students. The rationale/justification for each instrument should include research and theory such as levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and selection of learning styles for each question, reasons for the length of the assessment and arrangement of questions, and timing within the unit of study. For comparison of student growth across the unit, consider using some of the same questions on the diagnostic and summative instruments for a pre-post comparison of student understanding. Three formats for assessment are**
ideal for research triangulation. However, common sense needs to align subject matter, pedagogy, time, and resources. Therefore two, four, or some other number of assessment formats may be used to assess what students know and can do related to the essential questions for the unit.

**Oral Report:** Each individual will have 8 minutes to report on the assessment unit. There is not be time to cover everything during this presentation. Therefore, provide an overview and then pick carefully an instrument or two that you choose to highlight. You MUST include the culminating project assessment. The presentation should be informative to your colleagues.

© POSTNOTE: Retain copies of all course products to document your progress through the GSE Secondary Education Program. Products from this class (especially the ‘philosophy of assessment’ and ‘assessment plan’) should be included in your exit portfolio for the M.Ed. program and can also become part of your professional portfolio used for job placement.