

## **CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN SEVERE DISABILITIES**

**Fall 2010**

**Tuesdays, 7:20 to 10:00**

**Class Meeting Dates: August 31 to December 7, 2010 (No class Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>)**

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### **Office Hours/Contacting me:**

One of the best ways to reach me is via email at [ealtieri@radford.edu](mailto:ealtieri@radford.edu) I check my email frequently throughout the work day and usually once an evening before 9 p.m. I will try to get back to you that day or first thing the next day. However, I am in the schools supervising Monday afternoons and Tuesday and Thursday mornings and have infrequent access to email during that time.

I can almost always stay after class briefly to answer questions. I have regular office hours on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons 3-5 p.m., so please feel free to call me then at 540-831-5590. If I am not in, please leave a message with the best number and time to reach me. In addition, I would be glad to talk with you outside of class any time that works for both of us. Just call or e-mail me to let me know you would like to get together and we will work out the details.

I will be working on class most Sunday evenings and I will keep the Who's Online Feature open in our Blackboard site so I can answer questions about assignments or we can chat any time that evening.

Blackboard URL for class: <http://mymason.gmu.edu> Submit your username x\_firstname.lastname and the password [bbcommunity](#), click on the My Organizations tab, and find Curriculum and Assessment 2010.

### **Purpose/Rationale:**

This course is designed to develop knowledge and skills related to best practices in curriculum and assessment for those preparing to teach individuals with severe disabilities who need an individualized, adapted approach to the general education curriculum. Three major components of the assessment process will be addressed:

- (1) Initial diagnosis and assessment for establishing/maintaining eligibility for services and identifying needed supports and services;
- (2) Assessment to develop standards-based IEPs and to create meaningful, functional, academically-based curriculum within an inclusive framework; and
- (3) Assessment to evaluate student progress for the IEP, the VAAP and state and national assessment mandates.

Students will plan, develop, and implement a variety of assessment and curriculum activities with target students with severe disabilities within each of the three assessment components. Applied use of assistive technology will be integrated within the course. Field-based activities in corresponding practicum will allow students to directly apply and demonstrate their learning.

GMU Course Description: Addresses best practices in curriculum and assessment for individuals with severe disabilities. Covers the design of assessment and evaluation techniques and procedures for the severe-needs population, including adaptations and accommodations. Covers IEP formulation and implementation with linkage to assessment. Course is equivalent to EDSE 649 for students in the severe disabilities program.

**Course Texts and Readings:**

Browder, D. & Spooner, F. (2006). *Teaching language arts, math and science to students with significant cognitive disabilities*. Baltimore: Brookes.

There will be additional readings: Either a PDF copy of an article or a URL to link you to the reading will be posted in each unit in the Readings folder on Blackboard.

**Learning Objectives:**

The licensure competencies addressed by this course are taken from the Virginia Department of Education Licensure standards for Special Education, Adapted Curriculum and from the Council for Exceptional Children standards for Special Education, Independence Curriculum. They include:

**[VDOE] Evaluation of pupil performance**

The relationships among assessment, instruction, and monitoring student progress to include student performance measures in grading practices, the ability to construct and interpret valid assessments using a variety of formats in order to measure student attainment of essential skills in a standards-based environment, and the ability to analyze assessment data to make decisions about how to improve instruction and student performance. Teaching methods shall be tailored to promote student academic progress and effective preparation for the Standards of Learning assessments. Methods of improving communication between schools and families and ways of increasing family involvement in student learning at home and in school and the Standards of Learning shall be included.

**[VDOE] Assessments and management of instruction and behavior**

- a. An understanding and application of the foundation of assessment and evaluation related to best special education practice, including:
  - (1) Ethical issues and responsibilities in the assessment of individuals with disabilities;
  - (2) Procedures for screening, prereferral, referral, and eligibility determinations;
  - (3) Factors that may influence assessment findings such as cultural, behavioral, and learning diversity;
  - (4) Administration, scoring, and interpretation of commonly used individual and group instruments, including norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, and curriculum-based measures as well as task analysis, observation, portfolio, and environmental assessments;
  - (5) Synthesis and interpretation of assessment findings for eligibility, program planning, and program evaluation decisions.
- b. An understanding and application of service delivery, curriculum, and instruction of students with disabilities, including:
  - (1) Classroom organization and curriculum development;
  - (2) Scope and sequence of the general education curriculum;
  - (3) Complex nature of language acquisition and reading
  - (4) Complex nature of numeracy acquisition and the sequential nature of mathematics;
  - (5) Alternative ways to teach content material including curriculum adaptation and curriculum modifications;
  - (6) Strategies to promote successful integration of students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers;
  - (7) Use of technology to promote student learning; and

- (8) Structure and organization of general education classrooms and other instructional settings representing the continuum of special education services

**[VDOE] Individualized education program implementation**

- a. Apply knowledge of assessment and evaluation throughout the K-12 grade levels to:
- (1) Construct, use, and interpret a variety of standardized and non-standardized data collection techniques, such as task analysis, observation, portfolio assessment and other curriculum-based measures;
  - (2) Make decisions about student progress, instruction, program, modifications, accommodations, placement, and teaching methodology;
  - (3) Demonstrate the use of assessment, evaluation, and other information to develop and implement individual educational planning and group instruction with students with disabilities in an adapted curriculum across the K-12 grade levels, including: Least restrictive environment and inclusion models; General education curriculum adaptation and modification; IEP implementation linking to standards of learning general curriculum;

**CEC Standard #8: Assessment**

CC8K1 Basic terminology used in assessment.

CC8K2 Legal provisions and ethical principles regarding assessment of individuals.

CC8K3 Screening, prereferral, referral, and classification procedures.

CC8K4 Use and limitations of assessment instruments.

CC8K5 National, state, and local accommodations and modifications.

IC8K1 Specialized terminology used in the assessment of individuals with disabilities.

IC8K2 Laws and policies regarding referral and placement procedures for individuals with disabilities.

IC8K3 Types and importance of information concerning individuals with disabilities available from families and public agencies.

CC8S1 Gather relevant background information.

CC8S2 Administer nonbiased formal and informal assessments.

CC8S3 Use technology to conduct assessments.

CC8S4 Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies.

CC8S5 Interpret information from formal and informal assessments.

CC8S6 Use assessment information in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions for individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

CC8S7 Report assessment results to all stakeholders using effective communication skills.

CC8S8 Evaluate instruction and monitor progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

CC8S9 Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies.

CC8S10 Create and maintain records.

IC8S1 Implement procedures for assessing and reporting both appropriate and problematic social behaviors of individuals with disabilities.

IC8S2 Use exceptionality-specific assessment instruments with individuals with disabilities.

IC8S3 Select, adapt, and modify assessments to accommodate the unique abilities and needs of individuals with disabilities.

IC8S4 Adapt and modify assessments to accommodate the unique abilities and needs of individuals with disabilities.

IC8S5 Develop and use a technology plan based on adaptive technology assessment.

IC8S6 Assess reliable method(s) of response of individuals who lack typical communication and performance abilities.

IC8S7 Monitor intragroup behavior changes across subjects and activities.

## **CEC Standard #9: Professional and Ethical Practice**

CC9K1 Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's teaching.

CC9K2 Importance of the teacher serving as a model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

CC9K3 Continuum of lifelong professional development.

CC9K4 Methods to remain current regarding research-validated practice.

IC9K1 Sources of unique services, networks, and organizations for individuals with disabilities.

IC9K2 Organizations and publications relevant to individuals with disabilities.

CC9S1 Practice within the CEC Code of Ethics and other standards of the profession.

CC9S2 Uphold high standards of competence and integrity and exercise sound judgment in the practice of the professional.

CC9S3 Act ethically in advocating for appropriate services.

CC9S4 Conduct professional activities in compliance with applicable laws and policies.

CC9S5 Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

CC9S6 Demonstrate sensitivity for the culture, language, religion, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation of individuals.

CC9S7 Practice within one's skill limit and obtain assistance as needed.

CC9S8 Use verbal, nonverbal, and written language effectively.

CC9S9 Conduct self-evaluation of instruction.

CC9S10 Access information on exceptionalities.

CC9S11 Reflect on one's practice to improve instruction and guide professional growth.

CC9S12 Engage in professional activities that benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, and one's colleagues.

IC9S1 Participate in the activities of professional organizations relevant to individuals with disabilities.

IC9S2 Ethical responsibility to advocate for appropriate services for individuals with disabilities.

IC9S3 Seek information regarding protocols, procedural guidelines, and policies designed to assist individuals with disabilities as they participate in school and community-based activities.

## **Format for Course**

This course will be organized into three learning units that correspond to the three major components of assessment (please see the list below). All class materials and activities, reading assignments including web links and PDF documents, PowerPoints, assignment descriptions and submission links, and on-line discussions will be made available within the unit folder found in your course menu in Blackboard. Units will be released by the instructor in sequential order throughout the semester.

1. Initial diagnosis, and assessment for establishing/maintaining eligibility for services, and identifying needed supports and services.  
Unit Dates: September 1st – September 27th<sup>th</sup>
2. Assessment to develop standards-based IEPs and to create meaningful, functional academic curriculum within an inclusive framework.  
Unit Dates: September 28<sup>th</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup>
3. Progress Monitoring and Alternate Assessment Strategies in the Academic Content Areas.  
Unit Dates: November 16<sup>th</sup> – December 10<sup>th</sup> .

## **Assignments**

A description of each assignment appears below. A detailed explanation with guidelines and rubric will be posted in the appropriate unit in Blackboard and explained during the appropriate class time.

1. **On-line discussion of readings and questions posted by the professor/class members- 90 points:** There will be a total of six on-line discussions related to course topics and

assignments. Full participation per the guidelines below will be worth up to 15 points each.

- a. By Saturday of the week of the discussion, you will write and post a well-thought through and concise, edited 250-350 word response to the question or subject. (can earn up to 5 points)
  - b. Read and respond informally to your peers' responses by class-time on Tuesday. Engage in dialogue - Ask questions, confirm, explore with each other. I expect you to read all of them, but a minimum of six are required. (can earn up to 5 points)
  - c. By class time on Tuesday, you will write and post a thoughtful 150-250 word response to one of your peer's full responses. Discuss what you learned from that person, what they made you think about, and how their understandings and experiences meshed or differed from your own. (up to 5 points)
2. **Assessment history on target student with critical analysis-100 points: DUE Mon., October 4<sup>th</sup>**  
You will use a process of thorough record review and interviews with family members and past teachers/support persons to create an assessment history on a target individual from your practicum/work setting. This will provide an easy-to-read all-in-one place record of all assessment information that has been gathered about this child and played a role in shaping his/her educational history. There will be four major tasks involved in this assignment:
- a. Research and synthesis of major reports and records
  - b. Creation of assessment history document
  - c. Interview of family member and/or member of Circle of Support, and addition of information to the history document
  - d. Critical analysis of child's assessment history and write-up

3. **Expanded narrative describing target student's PLOP (Present Level of Educational and Functional Performance) -200 points: DUE Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>**

NOTE: This is an NCATE/SD Consortium Performance Assessment Task to be included in your graduate portfolio. Please remember to save your submitted document, your grade, and feedback you receive from your instructor.

You will continue to focus on the target student with significant disabilities that you used for the Assessment History. There will be three major tasks involved in this assignment:

- a. Summary of student's past assessment and IEP information (using information gathered for assessment history)
  - b. Functional and curriculum-based assessment activities with your target student and team members to gather new/revised assessment information.
  - c. Development of an expanded written narrative with two parts:
    - i. Create a positive portrayal/introduction strong statement of capacity for the student
    - ii. Describe the Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance per new regulations and VDOE procedures and guidelines for the IEP.
4. **Alternate Assessment/Progress Monitoring Assignment - 100 points: DUE Monday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**  
Each class participant will develop a comprehensive plan for monitoring of target student progress in either the literacy or numeracy academic area. You will build on the PLOP you created for your target student. This assignment will involve four major tasks:
- a. Reiteration of the statement of instructional need and starting points in the academic area you have selected for the purposes of this assignment (literacy or numeracy) from the PLOP.
  - b. Identification of ASOLs as instructional targets for **each** of the component areas under

that academic area for your student.

- c. Creation of a new goal with objectives/benchmarks for this student's IEP that addresses the standards area you've chosen in the best possible way for this student, given their other functional and academic needs, their communication abilities, their chronological age, and the concerns and priorities expressed by family members. Include objectives or benchmarks
  - d. Completion of a schedule matrix that shows how instruction and practice on objectives or benchmarks for the goal will be imbedded within activities and settings.
  - e. Design an evaluation plan or evidence collection system for monitoring progress on this goal and for collecting documentation for the VAAP. Criteria, procedures and schedule for evaluation must be included.
    - i. Include at least three different forms of evidence gathering/data collection within a minimum of three activities or settings.
    - ii. One of your forms of evidence must be an actual data collection method which includes a form for direct observation of the student and a method for displaying data using a chart or graph.
5. **Class Participation (up to 10 pts., 4 are possible as extra credit)** – Students will earn one point for attending from beginning to end of class each Tuesday and for participating meaningfully in the class. This means you must be on-time and stay for the entire class. Course Facilitators at each site will document attendance. If you do not see your points each week in BB, that means your CF has not provided me with attendance!

**Grading: Total points possible 500.**

**A (94-100%) = 470-500; A- (91-93%) = 455-469; B+ (88-90%) = 440-454; B (84-87%) = 420-439; B- (81-83%) = 405-419; C+ (78-80%) = 390-404; C (74-77%) = 370-389; C- (71-73%) = 355-369; D (61% and below) = 354 or less**

Course grades will be calculated by summing the points earned on assignments along with a consideration of the average and range of performance of others in class. All written products must be edited before submission. **No submission with significant problems with writing quality and/or errors in writing mechanics will be eligible to receive the grade of A.** The average and range of performance of others in class may also be considered in determining the need for a grading curve. By the third class, you will be able to access your current standing in class on Blackboard. There will be a penalty of one letter grade for assignments submitted after the due date. However, I will work with you if there are extenuating circumstances – You must contact me in advance of the due date to **contract** for an extension. Any incomplete grades need to be completed within six weeks following the end of the course or final grades will be reduced a grade for each additional month delay. You are eligible to resubmit assignments one time that received the grade of B- or less on the first go-round. The two scores will be averaged for your final grade on that assignment. You will not receive extensive feedback on your second submission.

**CONSORTIUM COURSE POLICIES**

Honor Code

Each university has its own honor code and it is important for you to review the honor code at your university. However, all students taking this course, regardless of the university they are enrolled in, are expected to follow this honor code and also to pledge all assignments and their exam to indicate that they have followed the honor code. A pledge means that you have not cheated or plagiarized, nor have you given or received assistance that violated the description of how assignments are to be completed for this course. The shortened version may be used: "Pledged" followed by the date and your full name (typed "signatures" will be OK for assignments/tests submitted electronically).

A complete copy of each university's Honor System document is available through

GMU: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

VCU: [www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/rg7honor.html](http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/rg7honor.html).

UVA: <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>

Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/dos-web/honorcode.html>

NSU: [http://www.nsu.edu/student\\_judicial/policy.html](http://www.nsu.edu/student_judicial/policy.html)

### Accommodations for Disability

At all the participating universities, accommodations can be made with the instructor if a student has a disability. If this is relevant to you, please contact me on the first night of class (can be through email) and indicate both what the disability is and how your university has made accommodations for you in the past. I will discuss (via email) this further with you until we reach consensus. University specific information regarding eligibility, services and accommodations can be found at:

GMU: <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/>

VCU: <http://www.students.vcu.edu/dss/index.html>

UVA: <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/services.html>

Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/~dro/>

NSU: <http://www.nsu.edu/disabilityservices/index.html>

### Inclement Weather

Classes will be cancelled if the university is closed at the site where the class is taught from (in this case, Radford University) or at George Mason University, which operates the Polycom Bridge to connect all the class sites. A message will be posted on the class Blackboard site and all class members will receive an email. Because such cancellations are often at the last minute, it may be difficult to get this message prior to leaving for class. If in doubt, for GMU, dial GMU 703-993-1000 or visit the university website [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu). For Radford University, dial 540-831-5000 or visit the university website [www.radford.edu](http://www.radford.edu). Please do not email us; I will email you regarding weather as soon as it is announced. Please note, the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather is determined by the decision of the instructing university only. If the instructing university is open and operational then you are expected to attend class.

### Cell Phones and Weapons

All cell phones and beepers should be deactivated while in the classroom. Also, University rules at all participating universities prohibit the possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive. Please consult the student handbook and your university for specific information concerning this policy at your university.

### Course Materials

This course gives you access to PowerPoint files, class lecture notes, handouts, and copyrighted articles. For the articles (available both on Blackboard and on a class CD), copyright laws must be followed: print only one copy per student. The PowerPoint presentations, notes, and handouts are provided on Blackboard for your convenience and to facilitate your mastery of concepts presented in this course; PowerPoints will be available on Blackboard by 2 p.m. of the class day or sooner. We encourage you to download all available course materials to a folder on your laptop/home computer and if you have a laptop, bring it with you to class. If you feel you must print copies of PowerPoint slides, this must be done before class begins (before 4 pm or 7:20 pm) and using a 3 or more slides per page handout format (do not print full slide pages). All of these materials should be regarded as authored materials, which if used or referred to must be fully credited through reference to the author, the class, and date. If used beyond citation, permission of the instructor/author is required.

### Technology Proficiencies

All students participating in this course are expected to be proficient in several technology skills. Students are expected to be proficient in using the Internet and have reliable and consistent Internet access. Students are also expected to have an active email account and to check email regularly. This course requires students to use Blackboard, which is our online course management system located at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>

NON GMU Students: Your login for Blackboard Community is: x\_*first name.last name* For example John Smith's username would be: x\_john.smith Your password is: *bbcommunity*

Students are expected to login to this system frequently and be proficient in using its features. Students are expected to be proficient in using the computer, which includes downloading and saving files, typing, and word processing skills. Students participating in this course are expected to use Microsoft Word 2007 for all written assignments. Furthermore, students are expected to use Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat Reader for class documents located on the Blackboard website. Although Microsoft PowerPoint is part of the Microsoft Office Suite, students who do not have PowerPoint can download a free viewer at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint-help/install-and-run-powerpoint-viewer-2007-HA010096695.aspx>

Adobe Acrobat Reader is a free software program used to read PDF files and can be downloaded at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/?promoid=BUIGO>

Students using Microsoft Office 2010 are expected to save and submit assignments in the Microsoft Office 2007 format, as all universities have not yet made the transition to Office 2010. Students still using Office 2003, must download the compatibility pack available from Microsoft <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=941b3470-3ae9-4aee-8f43-c6bb74cd1466&displaylang=en>

### TaskStream Submission

TaskStream ([www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com)) is an electronic portfolio and assessment management tool that the SD Consortium is utilizing in part to meet accreditation requirements for the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) as well as for student portfolio evaluation purposes. EVERY student taking this course at EVERY university IS REQUIRED to upload and submit the signature assignment for this course to TaskStream for evaluation by the end of the semester. Directions for creating an account in TaskStream and submitting assignments are available on Blackboard in the *TaskStream* folder within the *Syllabus* section.

The signature assignment(s) for this class is: *The Expanded Narrative PLOP Assignment*

### Course Facilitators

Each class site will have a student facilitator or assistant who will assist with the class. Learn who that person is as they will be taking role and keeping track of class participation and reporting it to me weekly. If you must miss or be late for a class, you should notify the facilitator (and me) as soon as you know your plans. Because of the potential for confusion caused by people speaking at the same time in this multi-site course, we ask all class members to raise their hands before asking questions or making comments. Along with the facilitators, I will try hard to enforce this rule and to be alert to questions from the distance sites. Facilitators will also email or upload to Blackboard in-class written tasks following class or early the next day. When in-class assignment forms or handouts are sent the day of the class, facilitators will need to download and copy them for class members.



### Blackboard Assistance

This course requires that you be a regular email user and be able to use various features of Blackboard (sign on, download materials, hand in completed assignments electronically in the drop box). You may direct your questions about Blackboard to the facilitator at the class site as well as to email Marci Kinas Jerome (mkinas@gmu.edu). She will be the best resource. We are all learning this system together and some of us will be faster than others. Expect some snafus along the way, but please help each other out as you can. You will want to download all the required materials early in the semester or as soon as they are posted. Please note that some handouts/readings may be given to you in class that have not been posted on Blackboard. Also check Blackboard for announcements. Sometimes I will place handouts for class on Blackboard and will alert you by email or in the previous class; in these cases please download and bring them to class.

### Remote Site Viewing

All Consortium courses are recorded and archived on a video-streaming server. Students and faculty are welcome to view previous classes at <http://torrent.gmu.edu> and click on the link for SD Curr/Assessment in the Public Folders link. Classes are listed by date and time. Since the Consortium includes some remote site students, all consortium classes are broadcast live via the Internet at the same website. It is the policy of the consortium that students attending classes at university sites are expected to be present at those university sites during class time. However, in instances where students would otherwise miss class (in accordance with the attendance policy) students may participate in the class via the live web stream. However, students who participate in the web-stream instead of at their university site are still subject to the response cost as outlined in the attendance policy for this course. Directions for viewing the video-stream can be found in the course Blackboard site.

Student may also view the PowerPoints, communicate with the instructor, and interact with other at home students using Adobe Connect. Each consortium class has their own Adobe Connect website. To get to your Adobe Connect course site go to:

- Positive Behavior Supports: <http://webcon.gmu.edu/pbs>
- Curriculum and Assessment: <http://webcon.gmu.edu/assessment>
- Positioning and Handling: <http://webcon.gmu.edu/positioning>

You will login with the guest username (sdsguest@gmu.edu) and password (sdcsite).

The first time you use Adobe Connect you may be prompted to download a plug in, it only takes a few seconds to install.

### **GMU Students Only**

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](http://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](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 Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.