

**George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Program: Special Education
Summer 2010**

Course Title: EDSE 627 – Psychoeducational Assessment

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Office Hours: Mondays by appointment. Please contact me for a mutually agreeable time. I will always give scheduled appointments priority over drop-ins and phone calls. Doing that shows respect for the time and effort that the individual spent to arrange the meeting and travel to the university.

Virtual Office Hours: I am pleased to respond to questions by telephone or email; however, I am unable to be “on call, 24/7.” Therefore, I am also holding “virtual office hours.” Members of the class may email me at any time, but I am reserving two hours on Monday and on Wednesday afternoons to respond to emails. Please expect responses to your emails to be made during those hours.

Credit Hours: 3

Course Time: 4:30-9:00 P.M.

Course Days: Thursdays, June 3 – July 29

Course Description: Offers knowledge and experiential learning activities related to assessment of students with mild disabilities. Includes statistical and psychometric concepts in assessment. Addresses norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, curriculum-based, and informal assessment for instructional and placement decisions.

Student Outcomes:

As a result of active participation, completion of readings, research, and other activities in this course, students will be able to:

1. Provide the definition of assessment and the purposes and assumptions regarding assessment of exceptional children.
2. Describe relevant litigation and legislation pertinent to assessment.
3. Describe the characteristics of norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, curriculum-based and informal teacher-made tests, their similarities and differences, and their respective roles in the assessment process.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of basic measurement concepts and evaluate the psychometric properties of individual tests.

5. Select, administer, and score a variety of educational tests.
6. Interpret test results; generate appropriate educational goals and objectives based upon these results, and report test results in a professional written format.
7. 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.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Emotional Disturbance and Learning Disabilities and Mental Retardation. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional children, the major special education professional organization. As such, the learning objectives for this course cover many of the competencies for learning environments and social interactions. The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:

http://www.cec.sped/org/ps/perf_based_std/comm_core_4-21-01.html

Standard 8 - Assessment

Knowledge:

- Basic terminology used in assessment.
- Legal provisions and ethical principles regarding assessment of individuals.
- Screening, pre-referral, referral, and classification procedures.
- Use and limitations of assessment instruments.
- National, state or provincial, and local accommodations and modifications.

Skills:

- Gather relevant background information.
- Administer nonbiased formal and informal assessments.
- Use technology to conduct assessments.
- Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies.
- Interpret information from formal and informal assessments.
- 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.
- Report assessment results to all stakeholders using effective communication skills.
- Evaluate instruction and monitor progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies.
- Create and maintain records.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

Learning activities in this course will include the following:

- Instructor lecture, including explicit instruction using demonstration and modeling and implicit instruction by facilitating learning experiences that build on students' background knowledge and skills.
- Student participation (discussion, demonstration, inquiry) in small group and cooperative learning activities, including analysis of students with language, reading and writing deficits as depicted in scenarios (case reviews).
- Review and expansion of material read in preparation for the course sessions.
- Student self-assessment of progress throughout the course.
- Access and analyze materials and resources using a variety of medium, including Blackboard, web-based resources, and professional peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Examine curricular materials and analyze student learning deficits, patterns, and strategies (such as review of reading programs).
- Instructor-student dialogue and interactions during and outside of class sessions that bring relevance and heightened skills, knowledge and insights to the students and Instructor, with a focus on strengthening pedagogical skills for teaching language, reading, and writing to students with disabilities.

Required Text:

Taylor, Ronald. (2000). *Assessment of Exceptional Students: Educational & Psychological Procedures (8th Ed)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon

Wright, J. (n.d.) *Curriculum-based measurement: A manual for teachers*. Retrieved September 14, 2005 from <http://www.jimwrightonline.com/pdfdocs/cbaManual.pdf>

It is highly recommended that students bring the textbooks to class each week as the instructor may make specific references to specific pages during class. Other readings relevant to special education research applications will be assigned by the instructor as indicated by the needs and interests of the class.

Recommended Text:

APA Publication Manual. American Psychological Association, 6th Edition, American Psychological Association (2009) for APA style and reference citations.
 Assignments for this course are expected to reflect clear, excellent writing in APA style.

*Tip from the instructor: Some internet sites attempt to reduce the APA manual to only a few pages, but I have observed that there are often errors on these websites and they do not give clear or excellent information on writing. All assignments for this course are scored according to the written language and technical aspects of organizing and citing content using the APA style.

Other readings will be posted on the class blackboard site in the form of Adobe Acrobat (pdf) or Microsoft Word documents.

Each student is responsible for downloading class materials and bringing either a hard copy or the downloaded documents on their laptop to class. NO HANDOUTS WILL BE PROVIDED BEYOND THE FIRST NIGHT OF CLASS.

NOTE:

This syllabus may change according to class needs.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with instructor or need special arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

Student Responsibilities:

George Mason Blackboard: <http://courses.gmu.edu> From this link, follow the directions to get into this semester's class. On this *EDSE 627* course site, you will find a variety of materials related to this course. The site will be updated as the course progresses.

Students are responsible for any information shared via Blackboard and should check the site regularly. All class materials will be posted on Bb at least two days before the class session.

Each student is responsible for downloading class materials and bringing either a hard copy or the downloaded documents on their laptop to class. NO HANDOUTS WILL BE PROVIDED BEYOND THE FIRST NIGHT OF CLASS.

ADDITIONAL LISTING OF RESOURCES AND EXPECTATIONS:

George Mason University Email: <https://mserver3.gmu.edu/>

From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account. Course email correspondence and other important university emails will be sent to GMU email accounts.

George Mason Patriot Web: <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>

A self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. There is a wealth of useful links, information, and online forms on this website including program of studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

TASKSTREAM SUBMISSION OF SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT

The signature assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason,s NCATE management system, TaskStream: (<https://www.taskstream.com>).

Every student registered for **any** EDSE course is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Failure to upload the required artifact by the deadline for discharge of incompletes on the following semester will result in the grade being changed to a grade of F by the registrar. If that happens, you will have to appeal your grade to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and explain why failure to follow instructions should not invoke the same penalty for you as it would for everyone else.

APA Formatting Guidelines: <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>

This website is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. It should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 6th edition for standard procedures of applying APA style. Additional APA style help URLs are available on the GSE library URL.

George Mason University Honor Code:

<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>

This URL defines student and faculty conduct to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community. The honor code deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying and stealing.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. **Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant.** You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper citation. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the registrar. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to **turnitin.com**, a plagiarism detection service, for an integrity assessment as needed.

Advising contact information: Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703-993-2474. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

Professional Behavior:

Students are expected to participate actively in all class activities. **To this end, the use of laptop computers is prohibited in this class.** In addition, the use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (cell phones, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.

Absences:

Understanding that you are individuals with full and active lives, who have made the commitment to regularly attend class, it is understood that there may be an instance when you are not able to attend. If this unlikely event should occur, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments given and due. Each night, students will participate in class activities which will contribute to the attendance/participation portion of the final grade. Points missed due to absences during class activities will NOT be made up.

It is also recommended that you notify the instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware that any points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be made up. **Two or more unexcused absences will result in no credit for this course.**

For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, be prepared for class, demonstrate professional behavior (see *Professional Disposition Criteria* at <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions), and complete all assignments with professional quality in a timely manner. To successfully complete this course, students need to adhere to the due dates for specific readings and assignments to be completed. If you feel you cannot adhere to the schedule noted in the syllabus, please contact the Instructor immediately to discuss options for withdrawing and completing the course during another semester.

Writing Support:

All assignments should reflect graduate level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you are deficient in any of these areas, you will need to document your work with the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Evidence-Based Practices:

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to Self-determination, facilitating transitions, alternative assessments, and social skills. These EBPs are indicated with an asterisk (*) in this syllabus. Evidence for the selected research-based practices is informed by meta-analysis, literature reviews/synthesis, the technical assistance networks which provide web-based resources, and the national organizations whose mission is to support students with disabilities. We address both promising and emerging practices in the field of special education. This course will provide opportunities for students to take an active, decision-making role to thoughtfully select, modify, apply, and evaluate EBPs in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Assessment of Course Requirements:

Course requirements include readings (texts, online resources, professional journal articles that are independently accessed by students) and activities (both during and between course sessions) that prepare the student to acquire and/or increase their knowledge and skills in teaching reading and language to students with disabilities.

All assignments should be typed (submitted as hard copy please) and are due at 4:30 p.m. on the dates indicated. **In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, 5% of the total assignment points will be deducted each day from your grade for late assignments.** Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit. All assignments should reflect graduate level spelling, syntax, and grammar.

If you are deficient in any of these areas, you will need to document your work with the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner.
- When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes, syllabus revisions, etc.) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that any points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be reclaimed.
- The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.
- Exemplary work may be kept and shared in the future (with your consent, of course!).
- Routine access (daily) to electronic mail and Blackboard for communication and assignments is crucial to participation in this class. For each in-class hour devoted to this course content, students are expected to spend 3 hours outside of class on course related assignments, which is a typical in-class to out-of- class ratio for a graduate level course.

Evaluation and Course Requirements

Assignment	Points
1. Take home Final Examination	25
2. Norm-Referenced Test Review	10
3. Behavioral Observation	20
4. Local Assessment Practices: Description and Reflections	15
5. CBM Project	30
Total	100

Grading Criteria

95 –100%	= A
90 – 94%	= A-
80 – 89%	= B
70 – 79%	= C
< 70%	= F

REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Below is a summary of each assignment. Further instructions and rubrics will be distributed throughout the semester.

15 Points: Local Assessment Practices: Description and Reflections:

Write a paper describing school-based and district-wide special education assessment practices for your local school district. It should be approximately 4 pages professionally written, typed, double-spaced. How you gather the information is up to you: you may review official documents describing the school system's/special education department's approach to assessment issues, conduct web searches, interviews, etc. This is meant as a reflective and information gathering process, and will provide you with an opportunity to critique assessment practices relative to the information you've learned in this course.

You may determine how to gather the information for your paper, although you should include multiple sources. You will need to include interviews with other professionals, students, or parents regarding their understanding of local assessment practices, your own reflections, official documents describing the school system's/special education department's approach to assessment issues, etc.

25 Points: Final Exam:

A final exam will be administered which will involve questions representing the various items covered in the material in the course. This exam WILL NOT BE OPEN BOOK.

10 Points: Norm-Referenced Test Review:

Select a norm-referenced test currently used in your district. Review test materials beginning with the Examiner's Manual. Write a review of the test including the topics outlined in the criteria sheet (approximately 5 pages). Your school psychologist or educational diagnosticians (Speech/Language or Special Ed Teachers) in your schools can give you suggestions as to tests that they frequently use in evaluations. If you have a question as to the appropriateness of the test, please ask the instructor.

20 Points: Behavioral Observation:

Conduct a behavioral observation of a student in a classroom (or other setting if approved by instructor), using provided observational instruments. Select a classroom in which a teacher has concerns about his or her student(s). Ensure you have permission to conduct this observation *in advance*. A letter to the principal will be available on Blackboard. No identifying information of the student will be collected. Prepare a written summary of the observation including recommendations as appropriate.

30 Points: *Curriculum Based Measurement Assignment:

Each student will complete a curriculum-based measurement project including at least three baseline measures and six instructional probes. Based on a student's particular need and an analysis of the curriculum, design a Curriculum Based Measurement tool. Each student is free to determine the curriculum area for the project; however, the curriculum taught must be appropriate for continuous progress monitoring.

You will need to implement instruction over the course of the semester and use the CBM to guide instruction. Collect and graph data regarding the student's progress. This assignment has been designated, by the George Mason University Special Education faculty, as the performance based assessment artifact for this course.

Practicing teachers are encouraged to select curricular areas for which they currently bear instructional responsibility.

**Local Assessment Practices: Description and Reflections
15 Points**

Write a paper describing school-based and district-wide special education assessment practices for your local school district. It should be approximately 4 pages professionally written, typed, double-spaced. How you gather the information is up to you: you may review official documents describing the school system's/special education department's approach to assessment issues, conduct web searches, interviews, etc. This is meant as a reflective and information gathering process, and will provide you with an opportunity to critique assessment practices relative to the information you've learned in this course.

You may determine how to gather the information for your paper, although you should include multiple sources. You will need to include interviews with other professionals, students, or parents regarding their understanding of local assessment practices, your own reflections, official documents describing the school system's/special education department's approach to assessment issues, etc.

Component	Description	Points Possible	Points Earned
Description of school based assessment practices	What is happening within your school building to assess students? Consider formal and informal assessments.	3 points	
Description of county wide assessment practices	What is happening within FCPS to assess students? If your students participate in alternative assessments, provide that information in this section.	3 points	
Interview Findings	What do others think of the assessment practices in your school and/or district?	2 points	
Personal Reflections and Critical Views	What are your feelings about the	4 points	

Presented	assessment practices of your school? Your district? What would you change? Maintain?		
Information gathered from multiple sources	Interview, web research, official documents, etc.	1 point	
Writing Quality	Minimum of 4 pages, typed, double-spaced, 1” margins on all sides. Professionally written (free of spelling and grammar errors)	2 points	
TOTAL POINTS		15 POINTS	

Norm-Referenced Test Review Rubric

10 Points

Item	Points Possible	Points Earned
Introduction		
Name and describe assessment	2	
Interpretation of Results		
Describe statistics generated from test (normal curve equivalents, standard score equivalents, percentile ranks, stanines, age equivalents, etc.)	4	
Describe method of generating scores (computer, hand calculate, etc.)		
Technical Characteristics		
Describe normative sample, reliability, validity.	2	
Review of Relevant Research		
Describe research results that examined this test.	1	
Level of Appropriateness for Your Student Population		
Would this be an appropriate assessment for your students? Why or why not? Include discussion of biases, anxieties, and other issues discussed in class.	1	
Total Score	10	

1. **Select a norm-referenced test currently used in your district.**
2. **Review test materials.**
 - a. **Begin with the Examiner’s Manual.**
 - b. **Refer to Taylor text.**
 - c. **Refer to the Mental Measurements Yearbook.**
3. **Write a review (APA format) of the test including all rubric elements listed above.**

Behavioral Observation Paper
20 Points

Conduct a behavioral observation of a student in a classroom, using the provided observational instruments. Select a classroom in which a teacher has concerns about his or her student(s). Ensure you have permission to conduct this observation *in advance*. A letter to the principal will be available to you. No identifying information of the student will be collected. Prepare a written summary (APA format) of the observation including recommendations as appropriate.

Rubric Component	Possible Points	Points Earned
Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes student • Describes classroom setting • Describes academic tasks 	3 point	
Behavioral Observation Described In Specific Detail	6 points	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 specific ideas • Links each recommendation to observation 	8 points	
Conclusion	3 points	
Total Points	20 points	

**Scoring of CBM Project (Signature Artifact)
30 Points**

Item	Possible Points	Points Earned
Planning		
Student Information (present a clear picture of student)	2	
Reason for assessment	1	
Rationale for content selection (why did you choose this skill?)	2	
Behavioral objective(s) written in IEP goal format	2	
Probe description	2	
Instruction		
Clear description of instruction (enough detail that another teacher could replicate the instruction)	4	
Measurement		
Clear description of measurement (how did you come up with the scores?)	2	
Clarity of Graphic Display	1	
Baseline (at least 2 probes)	1	
Aimline	2	
Phaseline (no data crosses phaseline)	1	
Instructional Data (at least 6 probes)	2	
Data-decision rules evident (anecdotal information about probes)	2	
Recommendations and Conclusion (should this process be continued? modified? What would you suggest and why?)	2	
Writing		
Correct APA format throughout	2	
Grammar and spelling	2	
Total	30	

Class Schedule

Session	Topic	Assignment Due
1 June 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and Course Overview • Definitions, Purpose, and Assumptions of Assessment • IDEA: Overview of Assessment Process • Federal Eligibility Categories: Define and Discuss • Legal, professional, and ethical requirements relative to assessment • What is Curriculum Based Measurement? 	Wright 1 Taylor 1, 2 & 3
2 June 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoring, Normative Data, Reliability, Validity • Considerations in Test Selection & Administration • Norm-Referenced Assessments • Criterion-Referenced Assessments 	Wright 2, 3 Taylor 5
3 June 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS: IRIS MODULE 	Local Assessment Paper Due
4 June 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to Intervention (RTI) • Interpreting Data and Reports • Intelligence Assessment • Academic Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language • Behavior Assessment 	Taylor 4, 7, 9, 10 Wright 4
5 July 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Assessment Measures • Alternative Assessments • Linking Assessment and Instruction • Writing Assessment Reports 	Test Review Due Taylor 6
6 July 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Class Lab on Achievement Tests 	Taylor 11 YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS: Taylor 10 (Oral Language) Taylor 12 (Reading) Taylor 13 (Math) Taylor 14 (Written Expression)
7 July 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Effective Curriculum Based Assessments • Adaptive Behavior Assessments • Test Accommodations • Interpreting Assessment for Educational 	Behavior Observation Due Wright 5 Taylor 8

	Interventions	
8 July 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Class: TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM 	
9 July 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Assessment • Transition Assessment • Communicating Assessment Findings to Parents • Multicultural Considerations • Current Trends in Assessment 	<p>CBM Project Due</p> <p>Taylor 15, 16</p>

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