

George Mason University
EDCI 624: Assessment, Identification and Evaluation of Gifted Learners
Innovation Hall rm. 131 (M/W)
Research I rm. 202 (S)
4:30-7:10 M/W & 9:00-3:00 Saturday

Instructor: Dr. Shannon King, PhD, NBCT
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description: Examines broad understandings of intelligence and assessment. Provides techniques to identify gifted students. Develops specific understandings of assessment techniques and awareness of the influences of language, culture, ethnicity, gender, and exceptionality on recognition and subsequent identification of giftedness.

Course Overview:

This course is designed to examine broad understandings about assessment, evaluation and identification of gifted learners; to develop specific understandings of assessment techniques, both formal and informal; to identify gifted students and to examine program evaluation design. Furthermore, this course is designed to make students aware of the influences of language, culture, ethnicity, gender, age and exceptionality on the recognition and subsequent identification of giftedness, assessment of gifted learners and evaluation of gifted programs..

Standards: This course is designed around the joint National Association for Gifted Children/Council for Exceptional Children standards (2006) as well as the Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (1998) and specifically addresses 8 VAC 20-21-270: Gifted Education (add-on endorsement) standards.

Standard 8: Assessment

Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of educators of the gifted as multiple types of assessment information are required for both identification and learning progress decisions. Educators of the gifted use the results of such assessments to adjust instruction and to enhance ongoing learning progress. Educators of the gifted understand the process of identification, legal policies, and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with gifts and talents, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. They understand measurement theory and practices for addressing the interpretation of assessment results. In addition, educators of the gifted understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments. To ensure the use of nonbiased and equitable identification and learning progress models, educators of the gifted employ alternative assessments such as performance-based assessment, portfolios, and computer simulations.

K1	Processes and procedures for the identification of individuals with gifts and talents.
K2	Uses, limitations, and interpretation of multiple assessments in different domains for identifying individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from diverse backgrounds. K3 Uses and limitations of assessments documenting academic growth of individuals with gifts and talents.

S1	Use non-biased and equitable approaches for identifying individuals with gifts and talents, including those from diverse backgrounds.
S2	Use technically adequate qualitative and quantitative assessments for identifying and placing individuals with gifts and talents.
S3	Develop differentiated curriculum-based assessments for use in instructional planning and delivery for individuals with gifts and talents.
S4	Use alternative assessments and technologies to evaluate learning of individuals with gifts and talents.

Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice

Educators of the gifted are guided by the profession’s ethical and professional practice standards. They practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to professional and ethical considerations. They engage in professional activities that promote growth in individuals with gifts and talents and update themselves on evidence-based best practices. Educators of the gifted view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice. They are aware of how attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Educators of the gifted understand that culture and language interact with gifts and talents and are sensitive to the many aspects of the diversity of individuals with gifts and talents and their families.

K1	Personal and cultural frames of reference that affect one’s teaching of individuals with gifts and talents, including biases about individuals from diverse backgrounds.
K2	Organizations and publications relevant to the field of gifted and talented education.
S1	Assess personal skills and limitations in teaching individuals with exceptional learning needs.
S2	Maintain confidential communication about individuals with gifts and talents.
S3	Encourage and model respect for the full range of diversity among individuals with gifts and talents.
S4	Conduct activities in gifted and talented education in compliance with laws, policies, and standards of ethical practice.
S5	Improve practice through continuous research-supported professional development in gifted education and related fields.
S6	Participate in the activities of professional organizations related to gifted and talented education.
S7	Reflect on personal practice to improve teaching and guide professional growth in gifted and talented education.

Standard 10: Collaboration

Educators of the gifted effectively collaborate with families, other educators, and related service providers. This collaboration enhances comprehensive articulated program options across educational levels and engagement of individuals with gifts and talents in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Moreover, educators of the gifted embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with gifts and talents. They promote and advocate for the learning and well being of individuals with gifts and talents across settings and diverse learning experiences.

K1	Culturally responsive behaviors that promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals with gifts and talents, their families, school personnel, and community members.
S1	Respond to concerns of families of individuals with gifts and talents.
S2	Collaborate with stakeholders outside the school setting who serve individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families
S3	Advocate for the benefit of individuals with gifts and talents and their families.
S4	Collaborate with individuals with gifts and talents, their families, general, and special educators, and other school staff to articulate a comprehensive preschool through secondary educational program.
S5	Collaborate with families, community members, and professionals in assessment of individuals with gifts and talents.

S6	Communicate and consult with school personnel about the characteristics and needs of individuals with gifts and talents, including individuals from diverse backgrounds.
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Virginia Department of Education: Gifted Education

2 c. Gifted behaviors in special populations (i.e., those who are culturally diverse, low income or physically disabled)

3. Understanding of specific techniques to identify gifted students using diagnostic and prescriptive approaches to assessment including:

- a. multiple assessment instruments and identification strategies through a review of portfolio or performance, or both;
- b. the use of rating scales, checklists, and questionnaires by parents, teachers or others;
- c. the evaluation of data collected from student records such as grades, honors and awards, and,
- d. the use of case study reports providing information concerning exceptional conditions.

6. Understanding of contemporary issues and research in gifted education.

7. Understanding of, and proficiency in, grammar, usage, and mechanics and their integration in writing

Course Goals and Student Outcomes:

Participants in this course will demonstrate their competency in the following areas:

1. Ability to identify the salient issues in assessment and identification of gifted learners;
2. Identification of varied expressions of advanced aptitude including those that may be influenced by culture, ethnicity, gender, age, exceptionality and income.
3. Recognition of appropriate use of informal and formal assessments in the assessment and identification of gifted learners;
4. Ability to critique the use of informal and formal assessments in the assessment and identification of gifted learners;
5. Ability to utilize informal and formal assessments to provide a continuum of services to gifted learners;
6. Ability to identify and address current local, state and national issues related to assessment and identification of gifted learners;
7. Ability to provide accurate and timely information and explanation to parents, teachers, key stakeholders and where appropriate students; and,
8. Ability to demonstrate an understanding of the key elements and national standards for identification of gifted learners.

All participants will be expected to:

- a) Demonstrate knowledge of subject matter through informed participation in class discussions, presentations and products developed;
- b) Demonstrate their understanding of relevant issues and concerns in the assessment and identification of gifted students through critical reflections;
- c) Demonstrate their ability to create an accurate and usable identification model based on best practices in the field of gifted child education;
- d) Demonstrate their written and oral skills of expression to lead class discussions on relevant topics (e.g. age group, testing, assessment of intelligence...)
- e) Demonstrate their continued commitment to professional development through the ongoing use of their professional development plan.

Grading Scale:

A+ = 100; A = 94-98; A- = 90-93; B+ = 85-89; B = 80-84

C = 70-79 (not accepted for endorsement)

F = Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

Assignments:

- a) Each student is expected to be an active and informed participant in class and online discussions and/or presentations. Informed participation means that the student has read the material ahead of class and uses it to inform their opinion and experiences. Discussions are held during class and on online; therefore grades for participation will only be given at that time. **(20%)**
- b) Each student will keep a critical reflections journal. The journal will consist of a minimum of ten entries that briefly describe the reading, provide a thoughtful critique of the influence of the reading on their thinking; and note the impact of the information on the assessment/identification of giftedness. All entries are expected to be of high quality and meet the expectations of the Graduate School of Education with regard to mechanics and appropriate referencing. **(25%)**
- c) Mini-presentation – each student will examine the issues related to the assessment of academic achievement for gifted students. They will choose a content area (e.g. mathematics, language, science....) to study, determine how a gifted students' achievement and academic growth can best be monitored and recommend to the class means by which to do so. Each participant will give a brief (20 minute) presentation on the topic that includes examples and resources for the class. **(20%)**

Major Project (student choice) (35%):

Students will become an “expert” in a particular dimension of the identification of gifted and talented learners. Students may choose a particular underrepresented population (e.g. culture, ethnic group, gender, exceptionality, age, income level) to study. Each student will provide an outline of their presentation, a brief report of the current research in the field, and a list of references/ resources to share as part of their presentation.

Project Options:

1. Students can elect to create a model for assessment and identification of gifted learners. The model will be based on a specifically described population and designed to reflect the current state guidelines on the identification of gifted students as well as “best recommended” practices in the field of gifted education. Each model will be assessed for:

- a. Accuracy of information presented;
- b. Congruence of assessments and identification plan;
- c. Accuracy of compliance with state requirements;
- d. Age appropriateness;
- e. Inclusion of critical stakeholders;
- f. Acknowledgement of issues of special populations;
- g. Model for informing parents, administrators and teachers;
- h. Model for integration of findings into programming

2. Students may create a model evaluation design for their (or hypothetical) gifted program. The evaluation design must include all elements identified in the national standards for program evaluation (Landrum, Callahan, Shaklee (2001)) as well as the relevant issues identified in The Program Evaluation Standards: How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs (Sanders, SAGE Publications).

3. Students may negotiate an independent project of their choice that is specifically related to the topics in the course. The project must be of similar scope, depth and quality as indicated above.

All major projects will be share/duplicated with the members of the class. One additional copy will be submitted to the instructor as part of the overall performance assessment maintained on file for accreditation purposes. No information will be duplicated without the author’s permission.

Mode of Course Delivery:

Course delivery will be through mini-lectures, experiential activities, small group discussion based on professional interests and research based questions that can be examined through action research projects, whole class discussions or student presentations. Course discussion may also take place online via Blackboard.

Course Meeting Dates/Times

This is a hybrid course consisting of onsite and online learning opportunities. All students must have access to an internet connection and be able to use the GMU Blackboard site.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The university has a policy that requests students to turn off pagers and cell phones before class begins.

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) expects that all students abide by the following:

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, George Mason University has set forth a code of honor that includes policies on cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying and stealing. Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

The university is committed to complying with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 by providing reasonable accommodations for applicants for admission, students, applicants for employment, employees, and visitors who are disabled. 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.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In addition, students are expected to actively participate in online Db assignments; failure to log on during an assigned day constitutes an absence from class. Although absence alone is not a reason for lowering a grade, students are not relieved of the obligation to fulfill course assignments, including those that can only be fulfilled in class. Students who fail to participate (because of absences) in a course in which participation is a factor in evaluation, or students who miss an exam without an excuse, may be penalized according to the weighted value of the missed work as stated in the course syllabus (GMU University Catalog, pg. 32).

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR & DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions expected of a career professional. See www.gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF COMPUTING: 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.

Required Text:

Renzulli, J. (2004). Identification of Students for Gifted and Talented Programs. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

VanTassel-Baska, J. (2008). Alternative Assessments with Gifted and Talented Students. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Recommended Texts:

Dixon, F. and S. Moon (2006). The Handbook of Secondary Gifted Education. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Landrum, M., Callahan, C. and Shaklee, B. (2001). Aiming for Excellence: Gifted Program Standards. Prufrock Press. (www.nagc.org).

McAfee, O. & Leong, D. (2007). Assessing & Guiding Young Children’s Development and Learning (4th edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Lissitz, R. and Schafer, W. (2002). Assessment in Educational Reform. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Salvia, J., J. Yesseldyke and Bolt, S. (2007). Assessment in Special and Inclusive Education (10th edition). New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Proposed Class Schedule

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Reading Resources
Monday May 23 rd	Introduction to Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pre-Assessment: Goal Setting * Issues in gifted Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National Standards – NAGC www.gifted.nagc.org -National Research Center www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt 	
Wednesday May 25 th	Political & Social Issues in Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * NAGC Position Paper on Identification www.nagc.org * NAGC Program Standards on Identification www.nagc.org * Virginia State Standards on Identification www.doe.virginia.gov Basic Concepts of Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assessment of Intelligence * Reliability, Validity and Usefulness 	Renzulli Ch. 1, 9
Wednesday June 1 st	Alternative Models of Identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ June Maker – Multiple Intelligence ➤ Robert Sternberg- Successful Intelligence ➤ JP Guilford/M. Meeker – SOI Learning Abilities 	Van Tassel-Baska Ch. 1-4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ J. Renzulli- Revolving Door Identification Model ➤ R. Sternberg-Triarchic Theory ➤ Jacob Javit's Funded Projects 	
Saturday June 4 th a.m.	Discussion of Assessment and Preparation for mini-presentations Schedule appointments with the instructor	
Saturday June 4 th p.m.	Online Discussion: * Student Selected Topics related to mini presentations	Van Tassel-Baska Ch. 8-10
Monday June 6 th	Assessing Behaviors/Observations/Portfolios Mini Presentations	Van Tassel-Baska Ch. 12-13
Wednesday June 8 th	Assessing Environments * Assessing Instructional Ecology * Effects of Poverty * Social and Emotional issues * Evolution of Assessment Mini Presentations	Van Tassel-Baska Ch. 6-7 <i>Toward Excellence with Equity</i> Ch. 2-4
Monday June 13 th	Assessing Special Populations * Young Children * Twice Exceptional * Limited English Proficiency * Highly Gifted	Critical Reading Log Due! Van Tassel-Baska Ch. 5 Renzulli Ch. 10
Wednesday June 15 th	Assessing Social and Emotional Development * Young Children (K-6) * Adolescents (7-12)	Van Tassel-Baska Ch. 6-7
Saturday June 18 th a.m.	ONLINE Class: Creating Sound Assessment Systems * Assessment of Achievement for GT * Assessing Content Disciplines * <u>A National Deceived</u> http://nationdeceived.org/download.html	Van Tassel-Baska Ch. 14 *Selected other readings (provided)
Saturday June 18 th p.m.	<i>Work Session for Final Presentations—</i> appointments with the instructor as needed	Renzulli Ch. 5-7
Monday June 20 th	Evaluation of Gifted Programs http://ericec.org/faq/gt-evall.html	Final Critical Reading Log Due
Wednesday June 22 nd	Final Project Presentations Final Self-Assessment	

	Final Course Evaluations	
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