George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Program: Special Education
Fall 2011

Syllabus EDSE 627 5S1: Assessment (3 credits)
Fall 2011
Monday, 7:20 – 10:00
Keller Annex, Room 103
3807 University Drive

Instructor:
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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.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Provide the definition of assessment and the purposes and assumptions regarding assessment of exceptional children.
- Compare and contrast the terms assessment and testing.
- Describe relevant ethical standards, litigation, and legislation related to assessment.
- 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.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic measurement concepts and evaluate the psychometric properties of individual tests.
- Create graphic displays of data in appropriate formats including: stem and leaf plot, scatterplot, and line graph using a computer spreadsheet.
- Calculate descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients using a spreadsheet.
- Interpret test results, generate appropriate educational goals and objectives based upon these results, and report test results in a professional written format.

- Select, administer, and score of a variety of educational tests[1].
- 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.
- Write assessment reports of academic achievement tests.
- Conduct curriculum-based assessments to guide instructional decision-making.
- Explain the benefits and limits of different forms of assessment (e.g., individual, norm-referenced assessment vs. continuous progress measures).
- Explain the benefits and limits of different forms of data collected for assessment (e.g., standard scores vs. grade equivalents).
- Score and interpret behavior observation protocols from time sampling, event recording, and interval recording procedures.
- Describe the procedures and purposes of Response to Intervention (RTI).
- Critique assessment and instructional accommodations relative to specific learning characteristics.

EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to norm-referenced assessments, curriculum-based assessments, and classroom testing and grading. 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.

[1] It is impossible to train individuals enrolled in this class to criterion on the large number of tests on the market. Consequently, the class will provide general training on the procedures for administering one example of an achievement test battery that is currently in wide use. Individuals needing training on specific instruments should arrange for such training through their schools or the test publisher. This class does not include training in the administration of tests of intelligence or projective measures. The class does include treatment of general interpretation of such measures.

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 (CEC). The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:
http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html

The CEC Standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the following.

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 stakeholders using effective communication skills.
- Evaluate instruction & monitor progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies.
- Create and maintain records.

Nature of Course Delivery: Learning activities include the following:

- Class lectures, handouts, discussions, activities and participation
- Relevant media presentations
- Application activities
- Presentation of projects
- In-class paper and pencil assessments

REQUIRED RESOURCES

Textbooks

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Taylor, R. L. (2009). *Assessment of exceptional children: Educational and psychological procedures* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Required Access to Course Blackboard Site

Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course. Plan to access the Bb site several times per week; announcements and resources are posted on the Bb site in between class sessions. You are responsible for accessing the materials – for printed copies, etc. prior to class. http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu Click the Login tab. Your Login and password is the same as your George Mason e-mail login. Once you enter, select EDSE 503 course.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor. Please silence all devices before class begins.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.gmu.edu/].

IMPORTANT NOTES

1. Professional Behavior: 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.

2. Late Assignment Policy: All assignments must be submitted *on or before* the assigned due date at 7:20 pm. **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.**

3. Written Products: All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner following guidelines stated in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition). All final products must be typed. Products that, in the judgment of the instructor, are unreadable or unprofessionally prepared will be returned un-graded or assigned a lower evaluation.

4. Placement for this Field Experience/Case Study: *If you have difficulty* finding a student for the case study assignment, Mason's Field Placement Specialist Lauren Clark lclarkg@gmu.edu can assist in placing Mason students at school sites. Mason is also required to track where self-placed students will complete their field experiences. Consequently, each person must access http://cehd.gmu.edu/endorse/ferf to complete the information requested (i.e., inform GMU of the school where you are working, the grade level of the youngster, and the approximate number of hours you anticipate working with the youngster) after targeting the student with whom this Case Study will be completed. Note: you will need to observe a reading classroom AND you will need access to work with a child with a disability over the semester.

5. Signature Assignment: For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, students will be required to submit a signature assignment from each of their Special Education courses to Taskstream, an electronic portfolio system. In addition, students completing Midpoint and Final Portfolio courses will use Taskstream to create a full portfolio of their work based on assignments completed throughout their program. For this reason, students will need to retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. In addition to the signature assignment, products from this class can become part of your individual program portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.

Note*: **Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is **required** to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a

"one time" course, 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). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.*

6. Responsible Computing: Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for non-instructional purposes (email, Facebook, Internet, etc.) during class time.

7. Absences: 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 may not be able to be made up.

8. Exemplary work: Exemplary work may be kept and shared in the future (with your consent, of course.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. Participation, Attendance, and Class Activities (60 points)

Class attendance and participation is demonstrated by attending class and being psychologically available to learn, completing and handing in weekly class assignments, and participating in class discussions/activities throughout the semester.

Points are negatively affected by being late to class, demonstrating a disinterest in the material/discussions (e.g., reflection activities, small group activities, discussions, etc.), being unprepared with materials, and/or absences. Points are positively impacted by thoughtful contributions made in class, listening to the ideas of other peers, respectively, and demonstrating an enthusiasm for learning.

Each week, there may be a weekly quiz or a group activity that will count towards this grade. If you are not in attendance, and thus not able to participate and contribute to class when these activities occur, assigned points will not be earned and may not be able to be made up at another time.

Point values can range from 1 to 10 points per activity.

2. Curriculum-Based Measurement Proposal (10 points)

The curriculum-based measurement proposal is the written plan for how you will monitor a single student's progress on a specific academic task. The proposal must include information about the

CBMs to be used (the assessments themselves would be a plus!) A template for the proposal will be discussed in class and posted online. You will email me this assignment.

***3. *** *Curriculum-Based Measurement Project (100 points)*

NOTE: As this is the signature assignment for EDSE 627, submit both a hard copy for grading AND an electronic version to TaskStream as directed below.

The academic area selected for the CBM project can include any curriculum area taught in school, but must be appropriate for continuous progress monitoring. Each project will include two baseline measures and six instructional probes, so the academic area selected must be one that can be assessed, taught on a regular basis, and then re-assessed throughout the instructional process. Teachers who are already practicing in the field are suggested to pick a curriculum area which they already teach to make the project more meaningful and easily applied in their own classrooms. Individuals without their own classroom are asked to choose curriculum areas that would be appropriate and easily teachable to college-aged peers and family members (and one such person would be targeted for assessment and instruction for this project).

a. Student Information
b. Content Description and Reason for Selection
c. Behavioral Objective
d. Description of the Probe(s) and Measurement Format including time limits
e. Description of the Instructional Methods/Materials Employed
f. Performance Graph
g. Discussion of Results including:
- summary of the student responses to instruction
- any decisions made using the data decision rules
- recommendations for instruction
- lessons learned (What would you do differently next time? Will you be able to apply this in your own classroom, and how?

Master's level classes should expect and require students to write well and frequently. In addition, special educators must be able to communicate to a wide variety of audiences (parents, teachers, administrators, etc.) through succinct, professional, and appropriate writing. You will have the opportunity to work on improving your writing on this case study through numerous peer and instructor reviews. The reviews will vary between focusing on content and style.

You will turn in a hard copy of your CBM project on December 12th. You are expected to indicate on the hard copy itself a section or part of a section that you think you wrote exceptionally well and a section or part of a section that you feel could be written better.

Curriculum-Based Measurement Project Rubric		
Element	*Points*	*Comments*

Student Information • Brief academic history • Brief description of student's academic strengths and weaknesses in the area targeted	/5	
Planning • Reason for assessment • Curriculum analysis • Behavioral objective(s) • Probes	/20	
Instruction • Instruction and materials selected show an understanding of the targeted area • Instructional modifications based on student assessment data evident	/10	
Measurement Graph • Clarity of Display • Baseline • Aimline • Phaseline	/25	
Results • Summary • Instructional Recommendations • Lessons Learned	/30	
Overall Presentation • Logical organization and explanation of project • APA format	/10	
TOTAL	**/100**	

4. Curriculum-Based Measurement Poster Presentation (10 points)

As master's level educators in the field, you will often be asked to attend and present at professional conferences. At our last class meeting, we will simulate a professional conference, where all students will be required to bring a tri-fold presentation board illustrating the major topic areas in their curriculum based measurement projects. All students will be expected to design their presentation boards with an audience in mind, taking into account readability of information, type of content displayed, and creativity exhibited in the final product. Students should be able to informally talk about their presentation boards to peers, as well as answer

questions the night of the presentation. The grading rubric and a sample presentation will be available on the class Blackboard site.

5. *Standardized Test Report and Interpretation(20 points)*

Special educators are often tasked with interpreting the results of standardized tests and compiling written reports for eligibility decisions. You will be required to write a report given data collected for you and available on the class website. There are three files necessary for the report assignment. They will appear in the folder labeled **Test Report** under the Course Content button on the Blackboard site. The three files you will need to download for this assignment are:

. •ACH-Test-Report-Data.pdf
. •ACH-Test-Report-Info.doc
. •Ach-Test-report-Template.doc

How to Use the Files

***ACH-Test-Report-Data.pdf*.** This file contains a computer printout of scores from the test given to this student. The printout should be attached to the end of a report; *however*, most laypeople and many professionals find this printout to be overwhelming. Therefore, your job will be to extract various pieces of information from this printout and insert them into the test report template provided for you.

***ACH-Test-Report-Info.doc*.** This document contains the notes that the test administrator made in giving the test. Information about student test behavior is described here as well as information from the student's referral, educational history and several reports from classroom teachers regarding the student's performance in their classes. Your job is to extract the relevant information from this document and insert them in the appropriate places on the template provided for you.

***Ach-Test-report-Template.doc*.** This is the template that I mentioned in the preceding section. Your job in this part of the assignment is to insert the data from the other two documents into the template and make a coherent report. Use the headings that I have included. Under each heading, you will find a short
description of what is to be done *in italics*. Delete the italicized instructions for the version that you submit in class. Also, make sure that the italics are turned off in the text that you write for your report. The instructions form the basis for the scoring rubric below. That means that I will be specifically looking for the things for which the instructions ask.

Scoring Rubric of Standardized Test Report and Interpretation

Item	**Points**	**Comments**
Report		
Student background	/1	
Summary of procedures used	/1	
Testing Observations & validity statement	/2	

Tasks for each subtest described	/1	
Descriptions of score types	/2	
Data table of subtests & composites	/1	
Domains discussed	/2	
Summary & Recommendations		/8
Overall Quality of writing	/2	

_____

Total Score **/20**

Grading

Below are the values of the various kinds of work required for the course, but students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

Your performance in the course will be rated upon the following

Participation in Class Activities	60
CBM Proposal	10
CBM Project*	100
CBM Poster Presentation	10
Standardized Test Report and Interpretation	20
Total	200

***The CBM Project is the signature assignment that will be posted to TaskStream**

The course letter grade will be determined by a point system in which the following thresholds will be used: ***A=94 – 100%, A-=90 – 93%, B+=87 – 89%, B=80 – 86%, C=70 – 79%, F=< than 70%***
***Traditional rounding principles apply (i.e. .5 rounds up)**

All assignments should be typed (submitted as hard copy please, unless otherwise noted) 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.

A final grade of Incomplete will be considered only due to extreme extenuating circumstances; please contact the instructor.

CLASS TOPICS & DUE DATES

NOTE:
* The course schedule WILL change according to class needs.

Class	Date	Big Ideas	Readings and **Assignments Due**
1	8/29	• Class Overview • Case Study Overview • Pretest • Learners' Profile • CBM Overview	
	9/5	• Labor Day – no class	
2	9/12	• CBMs In Depth*	READ: • **CBM for teachers, chapters 1 – 3 (pg. 1 – 47)** • CBM skeptic (on BB)
3	9/19	• Overview of Assessment: historical, philosophical, legal considerations • Screening – who needs help? o Initial Identification • Prereferral Process • CBM workgroups	READ: • **Chapter 1 from text (on BB)** • **Screening article (on BB)** • One school's implementation (on BB) • Screening in Reading preschool - K, 1-3, and 4-12 (on BB)

4	9/26	• Special Education Eligibility
		  o Practical and Ethical Considerations
		  o Reliability and Validity
			READ:
			• Chapter 3 from text (on BB)
			• What Teachers Need to Know About Assessment pgs 12 - 20 (on BB)
			
			DUE:
			CBM proposal by email

5	10/3	• Special Education Eligibility
		  o Descriptive Statistics
		  o Test Score Interpretation*
		• Writing Peer Review
			READ:
			What Teachers Need to Know About Assessment pgs 21 -38 (on BB)
			
			DUE:
			Hard copy of draft of Student Information

6	**10/11**	**Note: this is a Tuesday class**
		• Special Education Eligibility
		  o Learning Disabilities
		  o Emotional/Behavior Disorders
			BRING: **CBM data**
			
			READ:
			• **Zirkel, 2010**

		○ Mild Intellectual Disabilities ○ Test Score Interpretation • CBM workgroup	• **NY Times piece** • LD ID • ED ID • Stanovich
7	10/17	• Special Education Eligibility • IEP Development ○	READ: **TBD**
8	10/24	• Assessments in the Classroom ○ Types of Classroom Assessment* ○ Constructing Assessments* • Writing Peer Review	READ: • **Guskey, 2003** • **Wormeli Chapter (on BB)** • What Teachers Need to Know About Assessment pgs 57- 64 (on BB) DUE: **Hard copy of Planning section**
	10/31	Independent Work Time – no class meeting	
9	11/7	• Assessments in the Classroom ○ Grading* ○ Rubrics ○ Portfolio Assessment and other authentic assessments • •	READ: Wormeli Chapter (on BB) DUE: **Standardized Test Report and Interpretation**
10	11/14	• Progress Monitoring – Data-based decision making • CBM workgroups ○	READ: **TBD** BRING: **CBM data**
11	11/21	• Writing Peer Review	DUE: **Hard copy of draft of Instruction and Measurement sections**
12	11/28	• High Stakes Assessments	READ: **What Teachers Need to Know About Assessment pgs 49 - 55(on BB)**
13	12/5	• Accommodations • Model of Poster Presentation • Writing Peer Review	READ: • **Byrnes (2004)** • Kleinart, et al. (2002) • Washburn-Moses (2003)

			DUE: **Hard copy of draft of CBM project**
14	12/12	• Poster Presentations • Course evaluations • Wrap-up	DUE**:** **CBM poster presentation; Hard copy of final draft of CBM project**

Note: Syllabus is subject to change as needed. Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.