

**George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education  
Program: Special Education  
Spring 1 2012**

**Syllabus EDSE 627: Assessment (3 credits)**

Cohort: Fairfax County, 25 Section: 672

Tuesdays, 4:30 – 8:30

Fairfax High School, Room D131

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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<sup>1</sup>.
- 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.

**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](http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html)

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

## **RESOURCES**

#### *Textbooks*

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

Overton, T. (2012). *Assessing learners with special needs: An applied approach* (7<sup>th</sup> 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 627 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.
- 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/>].

#### *Core Values Commitment*

- The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

GSE faculty may add at the conclusion:

- 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**

- 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 before the start of class.
- Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time.
- 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 effective participation in this class.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. *Participation, Attendance, and Class Activities (80 points)*

Class attendance and participation is demonstrated by attending class, 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 Project (50 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 curriculum-based measurement (CBM) project can include any curriculum area taught in school, but must be appropriate for continuous progress monitoring. Each project will include three 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 that 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).

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 CEHD 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 CEHD program and the CEC performance based standards.

<b>Curriculum-Based Measurement Project Rubric</b>		
<i>Element</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Student Information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief academic history</li> <li>• Brief description of student’s academic strengths and weaknesses in the area targeted</li> </ul>	/3	
<b>Administration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of Probes (sample included in appendix)</li> <li>• Administration Procedures</li> <li>• Scoring Procedures</li> <li>• Behavioral Objective(s)</li> <li>• Explicit Decision Rules</li> </ul>	/10	
<b>Measurement Graph</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity of Display</li> <li>• Baseline phase line</li> <li>• Aimline</li> <li>• Trendline</li> </ul>	/8	
<b>Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of results</li> </ul>	/6	
<b>Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Recommendations</li> <li>• Lessons Learned</li> </ul>	/15	
<b>Overall Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• APA format</li> <li>• Graduate Level Work</li> </ul>	/8	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/50</b>	

3. 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!) **You will email the instructor this assignment.**

The CBM proposal should include the below elements. Based on this proposal you will receive feedback from the instructor on the suitability of your proposed project for the purposes of the course. If the proposed project does not fit appropriately within the scope of the course project, then the student will be given suggestions for a proposal revision and given the opportunity to revise and resubmit.

**Your proposal must contain the following elements:**

1. Name of the skill you will assess and a description of the probe you will use to evaluate the skill
2. The time length for your student to work on the probe. Remember, in most cases, probes are 2 – 3 minutes. Briefly explain the reasoning behind your time length.
3. Explain whether the time on your probe will be applied per item (e.g., name each word presented in 5 seconds or less) or applied across the entire body of the probe (e.g., complete 100 single digit multiplication problems, zero through nines, in one minute). Briefly explain the reasoning behind your timing procedures.
4. Explain whether you will score incorrect and correct responses or only correct responses for your student. Briefly explain the reasoning behind your scoring procedures.
5. Explain whether you will score whole points or allow partial credit. (If allowing partial credit, describe your scoring rules with specifics, e.g., counting individual digits in arithmetic problems.)
6. **Describe how you will ensure that each probe is of identical length and identical difficulty.**
7. Describe how you will share your student's progress with him/her.
8. Briefly describe your administration method. How long will it take to administer the probe (how long will you be with the student – not just how long the timing

part is)? How often do you plan to meet with your student? What materials will you use (audio recorder, stop watch, etc.)?

9. State your behavioral objective. Your behavioral objective must include: (a) what the student will do, including response format, (b) how well they are to do it by your last probe, and (c) the time allotment that you will use to measure fluency. For example: *By the end of six weeks, Katie will orally read a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level passage at a rate of 85 words correct in one minute.*
10. What are you most concerned about with actually completing this project?

The evaluation of the CBM Proposal will be based on a 1 point scale for each required element. One half point will be awarded for each included item, and a second half point will be awarded for each item description's clarity. The CBM proposal will be evaluated in this way for a total of 10 points.\*

#### *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. Instructor and peer feedback will be used to calculate the grade.

#### *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. Given data and a partially written educational report, you will be required to write certain sections of an educational report in language appropriate for fellow teachers and parents.

#### *6. In-class CBM participation (10 points)*

Students will begin each class with by administering and taking a CBM on essential assessment vocabulary. Students will graph their results using a bar graph.

### 7. Final (kinda-sorta) Exam (20 points)

The final (kinda-sorta) exam will consist of multiple choice, true or false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. This take home exam will include all textbook chapters, lectures, and class learning activities covered up to that point in the class. A review will be conducted in class two weeks before the final exam is due, and you will have two weeks to complete it. The final (kinda-sorta) exam is open-book and open-note, so feel free to use your text and class notes on the final exam. However, it is expected to be your own independent work, so collaboration with classmates is not permitted during the final (kinda-sorta) exam.

### 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	80
CBM Proposal	10
CBM Project*	50
CBM Poster Presentation	10
Standardized Test Report and Interpretation	20
In-class CBM Participation	10
Take-home final (kinda-sorta) exam	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.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

- The course schedule WILL change according to class needs.
- **The class will follow Fairfax County and GMU school closures for inclement weather.**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Big Topics</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments Due</b>
<b>1.</b>	1/10/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start of Class Logistics</li> <li>• Pretest</li> <li>• Syllabus Overview</li> <li>• Curriculum Based Measurement Overview</li> </ul>	DUE: Registration forms
<b>2.</b>	1/17/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBMs in depth                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Scoring</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	READ: <b>Hasbrouck &amp; Ihnot; Cech, 2008</b>  BRING: Reading Response
<b>3.</b>	1/24/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Assessment: historical, philosophical, legal considerations</li> <li>• Prereferral Process</li> <li>• Response to Intervention</li> <li>• Screening</li> <li>• Student Information Section</li> <li>• Special Education Eligibility                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical and Ethical Considerations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	READ: <b>Overton, Chapter 2; Harry &amp; Klingner, 2006 – Chapter 6</b>  BRING: Reading Response  DUE: CBM proposal by email

4.	1/31/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliability and Validity</li> <li>• Descriptive Statistics</li> <li>• Norm-Referenced Tests</li> <li>• Test Interpretation</li> <li>• Student Information Draft – Peer Review</li> </ul>	<p>READ: Overton, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 13; <b>Teachers, pgs 17 – 25;</b></p> <p>BRING: Reading Response</p> <p>DUE: Student Information Draft</p>
5.	2/7/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data-based decision making - CBMs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Goal lines</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Special Education Eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Learning Disabilities</li> <li>○ Emotional/Behavior Disorders</li> <li>○ Mild Intellectual Disabilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>READ: Overton, Chapters 8, 9, 10; <b>Kirp, 2006; Stanovich, 2005</b></p> <p>BRING: 3 baseline probes; Reading Response</p>
6.	2/14/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of Classroom Assessment*</li> <li>• Constructing Assessments*</li> <li>• Grading*</li> <li>• Rubrics</li> <li>• Authentic Assessments</li> <li>• Administration Section</li> <li>• Final (kinda-sorta) exam review</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <b>Guskey, 2003; Frey, 2010;</b> Overton, Chapter 6</p> <p>BRING: Reading Response</p> <p>DUE: Standardized Test Interpretation and Report</p>
7.	2/21/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior Assessments</li> <li>• Checklists, self-evaluations, journals, exit slips, etc.</li> <li>• Record keeping</li> <li>• Administration Draft – Peer Review</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <b>Gawande, 2009 – Chapter 2</b></p> <p>BRING: Reading Response</p> <p>DUE: Administration Draft</p>
8.	2/28/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress Monitoring</li> <li>• Data-based Decision Making Rules</li> <li>• Results/Discussion Section</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <b>Lembke, Hampton, &amp; Hendricker (not What Does Research Say About Using CBM in Reading and Mathematics?)</b></p> <p>BRING: CBM data (probes and graphs); Reading Response</p> <p>DUE: Final Exam</p>
9.	3/6/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High stakes Assessments</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <b>Sawchuck, 2010; Ash, 2008;</b></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodations</li> <li>• Overview of Poster Presentation Guidelines</li> <li>• Modeling of Poster Presentation</li> <li>• CBM Project Draft – Peer Review</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shah, 2011</b></p> <p>BRING: Reading Response</p> <p>DUE: CBM Project Draft</p>
<b>10.</b>	3/13/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Presentations with Peer Review</li> <li>• End of Course Logistics</li> <li>• Wrap Up, Closing Comments, &amp; Celebration</li> </ul>	<p>READ: <b>Hosp, Hosp, &amp; Howell, 2007 – Chapter 9</b></p> <p>DUE: CBM Project (hard copy); Poster presentation</p>
<p><b>Any changes will be posted as an announcement on Blackboard prior to class.</b></p>			

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.