

02.524/201 Educational Assessment of Students with Moderate Disabilities

Graduate School of Education
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Spring 2012
Tuesdays, 5-6:30 PM*/O'Leary 325

Instructor: Stacy Agee Szczesiul

Email: stacy_szczesiul@uml.edu

Office: O'Leary 523

Phone: (978) 934- 4633

Office Hours: Tu 1:30-3:00; W 12:00-1:30; or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Kristina Scott

Email: Kristina_scott@student.uml.edu

Graduate School of Education Conceptual Framework

The mission of the University of Massachusetts Lowell is to enhance the intellectual, personal and cultural development of its students through excellent, affordable educational programs. The University seeks to meet the needs of the Commonwealth today and into the future and supports the development of sustainable technologies and communities through its teaching, research, scholarship and engagement. The Graduate School of Education (GSE) contributes to this mission by developing professionals who help transform the region and beyond through leadership roles in education. Through this course, the GSE's commitment to "Education for Transformation" produces graduates who:

- demonstrate excellent knowledge, judgment and skills in their professional fields;
- collaborate with other educators to support educational excellence;
- use inquiry and research to address educational challenges

Course Overview

Assessment, particularly in the form of the standardized test, has become a defining characteristic of public education in America today. The current discourse about assessment (of students with and without disabilities) reveals the inherently political nature of education policy while also illustrating how schools serve as a microcosm for public understanding of broad, complex social issues. This discourse shapes policy decisions, which have real implications for the students who attend our public schools and the teachers and administrators who serve them. Consider the implications: performance-based assessments determine whether a school is defined as high achieving, low performing, or not demonstrating adequate growth; a single high-stakes test can determine whether a high school student receives a diploma; standardized instruments measuring cognitive ability and academic achievement will determine whether a student receives specialized services for a disability. This course is designed to provide students a framework for understanding the current debates and processes specific to assessment of students with mild/moderate disabilities. Participants in the class will focus on concepts and methods of assessment in special education with an emphasis on administering, scoring, interpreting, and reporting on formal and informal educational assessments.

Course Objectives/Student Outcomes

As a result of their successful completion of the course, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of general and current issues in assessment: terminology, legislation, purposes, procedures, and assumptions regarding the assessment of students with special learning needs.
- Explain the steps in the assessment process (screening, prereferral, referral, and classification) that reflect current practices and roles/responsibilities of various stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, other professionals).
- 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.
- Select, administer, and score a variety of assessment instruments.
- Interpret assessment results, generate appropriate educational goals and objectives based upon results, and report results in a professional written format.
- Use assessment information in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions for students with special learning needs, including those who come from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Course Objectives and Professional Standards

Course objectives are consistent with standards for teacher licensure outlined by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Specifically, the course addresses knowledge and skills noted in CEC Standard 8: Assessment:

- Basic terminology used in assessment
- Legal provisions and ethical principles regarding assessment
- Screening, prereferral, referral, and classification procedures
- Uses and limitations of assessment instruments
- National, state or provincial, and local accommodations and modifications
- Federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to special education.
- 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
- Preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Design or modification of curriculum, instructional materials, and general education classroom environments for students with moderate disabilities.

Academic Course Requirements/Expectations for Participation

Students will be expected to participate in and complete the following activities and assignments, which will be explained in more detail as the course proceeds:

On-Line Activities and Participation: [15 points] Preparation, participation, and subsequent learning in this course will occur both in on-line/virtual spaces and face-to-face/physical spaces. Students will be expected to complete assigned readings in preparation for class meetings (as they would for any course) and to complete on-line assignments. The on-line assignments serve as formative assessments for the instructor to understand where students are in their understanding of course-related knowledge and skill areas. The on-line assignments also serve as the basis for the face-to-face class meetings. In other words, the work that is done in class builds on the on-line assignment.

In-Class Activities and Participation: [15 points] This course and its pedagogical underpinnings are grounded in the assumption that learning is a social phenomenon—how we interact in the presence of content has implications for the meaning/knowledge we, as individuals, construct. Therefore, the successful completion of this course is contingent upon thoughtful, engaged participation of all class members. Course participants should come to class well-prepared to discuss all readings and collaborate in workshop activities. Being well-prepared necessarily means course participants have completed all on-line assignments prior to face-to-face meetings.

Performance Assessment #1 Short essay exam:[10 points] This exam, completed at home and submitted on-line, will address content from the first unit of the course.

Performance Assessment #2 Observation and CBM: [25 points] Course participants will select one K-12 student for multiple assessments to be conducted throughout the semester. If possible, the student selected should be encountering academic problems in one or more subject areas. For the purposes of the first assessment, course participants should observe the student at least two times and collect data from curriculum-based measures in the student's primary area of weakness. Based on the data collected, course participants will write a narrative report on the student. Assessment #2 details, including observation protocols, student information forms, and a sample student report, will be discussed in class and posted on the website.

Performance Assessment #3 WJIII Achievement Battery: [25 points] Working with the same K-12 student, course participants will administer, score, and interpret the results of the WJIII. The report will include descriptions of Broad Reading, Broad Mathematics and Broad Written Language; with three sub-tests per area. Test materials can be checked out in class; Assessment #3 details, including a sample report, will be discussed in class and posted on the website.

Performance Assessment #4 Final Assessment & Report: [30 points] Working with the same student, course participants will administer, score, and interpret the results of one additional assessment that answers questions based on CBM and WJIII data. Course participants will prepare a complete educational test report summarizing the results and how the results compare or contrast with the previous assessment results. The final report must include corrections from the first two reports and recommendations regarding services. Assessment #4 details, including a sample student report, will be discussed in class and posted on the course website.

Performance Assessment #5: IEP Development: [30 points] Course participants will demonstrate their understanding of course related content knowledge and skills through a simulated IEP meeting and a written reflection on the activity. Participants will assume various roles within the meeting, which is focused on a student who has been through the assessment process. It will be up to the team to determine the student's eligibility and an optimal course of action (which includes IEP development, if needed). Assessment #5 details will be discussed in class and posted on the website.

Failure to complete on-line assignments or absence from more than 2 face-to-face meetings will result in grade reductions and/or withdrawal from the course. All materials must be submitted on time. Late submissions will result in points deductions; assignments submitted one day after the due date will automatically be reduced a full letter grade and a half letter grade every day thereafter.

Overall Grade Rubric

Grade	GPA	Point Structure	Comment
A+	4.0	140-150	Work of the highest professional standard demonstrating independent and exemplary performance
A	4.0	130-139	Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance
A-	3.7	120-129	Very good work, indicating consistent and careful thought and attention to the task, but requiring some areas of improvement
B+	3.3	110-119	Good work, carefully executed for the most part, yet requiring several areas of improvement
B	3.0	100-109	Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not evident
Below Graduate Standard:			
B-	2.7	90-99	Effort is evident, but work indicates lack of understanding of the demands of the task
C+	2.3	80-89	Poor quality work with little attention to detail and the demands of the task
C	2.0	70-79	Work of very poor quality, indicating no understanding of the depth of analysis required
F	0.0	Below 70	Serious neglect or evidence of academic misconduct

Accommodations

This course adheres to the University's policy to provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities and for religious reasons.

<http://www.uml.edu/equal/Accommodations/accomodations.html>

Specific information for students can be found at <http://www.uml.edu/student-services/disability/Services.html>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the University's policies for Academic Integrity. These can be accessed at http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic_disonesty.htm

Required Texts

Salvia, J., Ysseldyke, J., & Bolt, S. (2012). *Assessment in Special and Inclusive Education*, 12th edition. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning: Belmont, CA.

2012 Educator's Manual and Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities (2006)

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html>

Tentative Schedule of Topics, Assignments, and Readings

Date Class #	Topic	Objectives	Readings and Assignments to Prepare
1.24 1	Unit 1: Assessment Overview <i>Introductions</i> <i>The Context for Assessment</i>	Understand course expectations and logistics. Understand concept of multi-tiered system of supports and how it applies to differentiated assessment and instruction. Understand current context for assessment. Understand purposes of assessment. Understand the assessment process.	Read Ch. 1 (RT) On-line activity: Work through the IRIS module (http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/hst/chalcycle.htm) and then respond to the discussion prompt. Post a response to the following prompt on the Week 1 discussion board by 9 pm Monday (1.23): We are in the “second policy revolution” in special education, moving beyond access to a free and appropriate public education to improving results and establishing accountability for students with disabilities in the general education system. Does the shift in policy focus from access to accountability hurt or help students with disabilities? Why? Materials needed for OL work: Damian case (HO)
1.31 2	<i>Legal and Ethical Considerations</i> <i>Eligibility under IDEA</i>	Understand the major laws and specific provisions that affect assessment. Understand the ethical standards for assessment developed by professional associations. Understand the 13 categories of disability under IDEA and their criteria for eligibility.	Read Ch. 2 & 3 (RT) On-line activity: Read Damian’s case. Analyze the actions and behavior of school personnel in the case using your understanding of ethical standards for assessment. Post your analysis on the Week 2 discussion board by 9 pm Monday (1.30). Materials needed for OL work: Excerpts from Vineland II technical manual Identify student/locate classroom/contact teacher for assessment assignments. Make arrangements for obtaining parent permission.
2.7 3	<i>Test Scores, Adaptation, and Accommodation and Technical Adequacy</i>	Understand basic quantitative concepts. Understand how student performances are scored objectively. Understand how tests are normed. Understand concepts of reliability and validity.	Read Ch. 4 & 5 (RT) On-line activity: Read the chapters from the Vineland II technical manual. Post a response to the following prompts by 9 pm Monday (2.6) on the Week 3 discussion board: What does an Adaptive Behavior Composite of 70 mean? What does a v-score of 13 mean? Are the norms for the test generally representative? Why or why not? What types of reliability evidence are offered? How do you judge the scale’s reliability? What can you say about the tests evidence of validity? Is it adequate? Why or why not?

			Materials needed for OL work: Performance Assessment #1 Schedule times for classroom observations, curriculum-based measures, achievement testing, and follow assessment.
	Performance Assessment #1: Short essay exam due 2.13		
	Unit 2: Classroom (Informal) Assessment		
2.14 4	<i>Observation of Student Behavior* (S/K)</i>	Understand why we use systematic observation in the assessment process. Understand general considerations in conducting observations. Understand defining behaviors, behavioral topographies and functions, and measurable characteristics of behavior. Understand how to conduct systematic observation.	Read Ch. 6 On-line activity: Complete Performance Assessment #1 and upload it to the dropbox on the Blackboard by 9 pm Monday (2.13). Materials needed for OL work: None Support materials: Writing technical reports (Pierangelo & Giuliani, Ch. 18)
2.21 5	<i>Teacher-made Assessments and Curriculum-Based Measurement*(K)</i>	Understand the purpose of teacher made tests in the assessment process. Understand special considerations in preparing and using teacher made tests. Understand the limitations of teacher made tests. Understand the defining characteristics of CBM. Understand different types of CBM and the purposes for which they are used. Know some common tools/procedures for administering CBM in reading, math and writing. Be familiar with off-the-shelf CBM packages. Identify 2 diagnostic approaches that can be used with CBM.	Read Ch. 7, 8, & 9 On-line activity: Work through the IRIS module, Classroom Assessment Part 1, (http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/gpm/chalcycle.htm) and then responding to the discussion prompt. Post a response to the following prompt on the Week 5 discussion board by 9 pm Monday (2.20): What are your experiences with classroom-based assessments? What challenges have you experienced? In your experience, have classroom-based assessments been helpful (despite the challenges)? Why or why not? If you have no experience with classroom-based assessment, talk with a classroom teacher—how does s/he respond to the questions above? Materials needed for OL work: Sample report #1 (Isabel)
	Performance Assessment #2: Student Report Part 1 (Informal Assessment: Observation and CBM) due 3.6		
	Unit 3: Formal Assessments and Eligibility Decisions		
2.28 6	<i>How to Evaluate a Test Using Test</i>	Understand the considerations in selecting a test to review.	Read Ch. 10 (on-line chapter), 21, & 22 On-line activity 1: Respond to the prompts below and post them

	<i>Adaptations/Accommodations Cultural and Linguistic Considerations</i>	<p>Understand how to review a test.</p> <p>Understand reasons for test adaptations and accommodations and factors to consider when deciding to make test changes.</p> <p>Understand level of cultural and linguistic diversity in US public schools.</p> <p>Understand legal protections and testing requirements for ELLs.</p> <p>Know different approaches to assessing ELLs.</p>	<p>to the Week 6 discussion boards by 9 pm on Monday (2.27). What are 5 questions you should ask when choosing a test for careful review? What kinds of evidence should test authors provide to support the uses they recommend for their test? What kinds of evidence should test authors provide to support the interpretations that they recommend for their test? What's a "prove it" approach to evaluating a test? Why would you use it? What reliability estimates should be reported in a test manual?</p> <p>On-line activity 2: Read and mark up a sample report to determine what questions you need answered in order to be ready to write your own professional report on a student.</p> <p>Materials needed for OL work: Isabel case</p>
3.6 7	<i>Assessment of Achievement* (K)</i>	<p>Know factors to consider in selecting an achievement test.</p> <p>Know the categories of achievement tests.</p> <p>Know the purposes of assessing achievement.</p> <p>Be able to describe/compare representative achievement tests.</p> <p>Know how to get the most out of an achievement test.</p> <p>Be familiar with how to administer and score the WJ III Achievement Battery.</p>	<p>Read Ch. 11</p> <p>On-line activity: Review Isabel's data. What can you say about her performance on the Woodcock Johnson Achievement battery? What can you say about her overall achievement? Her reading, math, writing performance? What conclusions might you draw from this data?</p> <p>Post your analysis of Isabel's data and what you might write in a technical report on her performance on the Week 7 discussion board by 9 pm Monday (3.5).</p> <p>Materials needed for OL work: Teague case, Chien case, Bianca case, Sasha case</p>
3.20 8	<i>Diagnostic Assessments: Reading, Math, Written & Oral Language</i>	<p>Understand the purpose of diagnostic assessment.</p> <p>Know why we assess reading and the areas assessed by diagnostic reading tests.</p> <p>Be familiar with at least two different reading assessments.</p> <p>Know why we use diagnostic math tests.</p> <p>Understand the different ways in which math is taught and how that affects assessment.</p> <p>Understand distinction between assessment of content and process.</p> <p>Be familiar with at least two different math assessments.</p> <p>Know why we assess oral and written language.</p> <p>Understand how cultural background may influence language assessment.</p>	<p>Read Ch. 13, 14, & 15</p> <p>On-line assignment: Read your assigned case and respond to the questions pertaining to General Assessment Issues, Test Interpretation Issues, and Other Assessment Issues. Post your responses on the Week 8 discussion board by 9 pm Monday (3.29). Be ready to present your interpretation of the case in class.</p>

		Know methods for eliciting oral language samples. Be familiar with two language tests.	Materials needed for OL work: Sam case and Pierangelo & Giuliani, Ch. 16
	Performance Assessment #3: Student Report Part 2 (Formal Assessment of Achievement) due 3. 27		
3.27 9	<i>Assessment of Intelligence</i>	Understand how student characteristics can affect performance on intelligence tests. Understand behaviors commonly sampled on intelligence tests. Know the historical and theoretical foundation or the development of intelligence tests. Know the factors that are commonly interpreted using intelligence tests. Understand how we learn about processing deficits through intelligence testing. Know the various types of intelligence tests. Be familiar with commonly used measures of intelligence. Begin to understand how eligibility decisions are made.	Read Ch. 16 (RT) and Pierangelo & Giuliani, Ch. 16 On line activity: Review Sam's data. Respond to the questions provided on the handout. Post your analysis of Sam's data and what you might write in a technical report on the Week 9 discussion board by 9 pm Monday (3.26). Be prepared to discuss your interpretation of the data in class. Materials needed for OL work: Colt case
4.3 10	<i>Measures of Social and Emotional Behavior* (K)</i>	Know reasons for assessing social-emotional functioning. Know several methods for assessing social-emotional functioning. Understand the components of FBA. Be familiar with commonly used scales for assessing social-emotional functioning.	Read Ch. 17 On-line activity: Work through the IRIS module: Functional Behavioral Analysis http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/fba/chalcycle.htm Review Colt's data. Respond to the questions provided on the handout. Post your analysis of Colt's report on the Week 10 discussion board by 9 pm Monday (4.2). Be prepared to discuss your conclusions and recommendations in class. Materials needed for OL work: RTI school level documents (CW)
	Performance Assessment #4: Student Report Part 3 (Final Report) due 4. 10		
	Unit 4:Using Assessments to Make Educational Decisions		
4.10 11	<i>Response-to-Intervention (RTI)/Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Pre-</i>	Define and describe MTSS and RTI concepts that underlie school assessment practices. Describe the steps/processes school personnel go	Read Ch. 24 (RT) On-line activity: Work through the IRIS modules RTI Parts 1-5 (http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources.html)

	<i>referral</i>	through in assessing student needs for differing levels of support. Understand the fundamental assumptions in assessing response to intervention.	Then, review the RTI documents from two school districts. How are they similar? Different? What would the implications be for you if you were a teacher in one of these schools? Materials needed for OL work: TBA
4.17 12	<i>Making Instructional Decisions and Special Education Eligibility Decisions</i>	Understand the 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd tier decisions made prior to a student becoming eligible for special education. Understand that decisions made in special education. Understand the disabilities recognized by IDE(I)A. Understand how the need for special education is established. Understand multidisciplinary teams. Understand process for determining eligibility and common problems associated with determining eligibility.	Read Ch. 26 & 27 On-line activity: TBA Materials needed for OL work: Pierangelo & Giuliani, Ch. 20
4.24 13	<i>Development of the IEP* (K)</i>	Understand the purpose of the IEP. Understand the components of the IEP. Be able to effectively write different components of IEP.	Read Pierangelo & Giuliani, Ch. 20 On-line activity: TBA Materials needed for OL work: TBA
5.1 14	<i>Final Assessment, Course Wrap-up and Retrospective Performance Assessment #5: Simulation and Reflection</i>	Demonstrate understanding of course-related knowledge and skill. Reflect on course content and processes.	
	Written reflection (part of Performance Assessment #5 due on 5.8)		