02.524/201 Educational Assessment of Students with Moderate Disabilities
Graduate School of Education
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Spring 2010
Tuesdays, 4-6:30 PM/O'Leary 517

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Office Hours: W 12-3 or by appointment

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 standardized educational tests.
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.

Knowledge:

- 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

Skills:

- Gather relevant background information
- Administer nonbiased formal and informal assessments
- Use technology to conduct assessments
- Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies
- Interpret information from formal and informal assessments
- Use assessment information in making eligibility, program, and placement decisions for individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Report assessment results to all stakeholders using effective communication skills
- Evaluate instruction and monitor progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs
- Develop or modify individualized assessment strategies
- Create and maintain records
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:

In-Class Activities and Participation: [75 pts; 5 pts/class] 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. Specifically, credit will be earned for participation in discussion, observation practice, WRAT scoring, PIAT scoring, IEP development, and psychological interpretation. Absences may 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.

Student Assessment #1 Observation and CBM: [20 pts] Course participants will select one student for assessment multiple assessments to be conducted throughout the semester. The student selected should be encountering academic (not behavioral) problems and performing below grade level. For the purposes of the first assessment, course participants should observe the student at least two times (each time in a different setting) and collect CBM data from three different reading, writing or math probes. Based on the data collected, course participants will write a narrative report on the student. Observation protocols, student information forms, and a sample student report will be discussed in class and posted on the website.

Student Assessment #2 WJIII: [30 pts] 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; a sample report will be discussed and posted on the website.

Student Assessment #3 Final Test and Report: [25 pts] Course participants will administer, score, and interpret the results of one additional formal test 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 an IEP. A sample student report will be discussed in class, including IEP development, and posted on the course website.

Article Review: [25 pts] Each student will select and review one recent article related to assessment of students with mild/moderate disabilities. Articles should be selected from Exceptional Children, RASE, Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, or the Journal of Learning Disabilities and submitted along with the review. Course participants will share their reviews via powerpoint presentation in class. A detailed review framework will be discussed in class and posted on the course website.

Final Exam: [25 pts] Course participants will be given a psychological and educational testing report to interpret. Based on reports, participants are required to write present level of performance and suggested IEP goals related to standards.
Overall Grade Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Point Structure</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>196-200</td>
<td>Work of the highest professional standard demonstrating independent and exemplary performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>188-195</td>
<td>Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>184-187</td>
<td>Very good work, indicating consistent and careful thought and attention to the task, but requiring some areas of improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>176-183</td>
<td>Good work, carefully executed for the most part, yet requiring several areas of improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>161-175</td>
<td>Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Graduate Standard:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>156-160</td>
<td>Effort is evident, but work indicates lack of understanding of the demands of the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>140-155</td>
<td>Poor quality work with little attention to detail and the demands of the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>139-130</td>
<td>Work of very poor quality, indicating no understanding of the depth of analysis required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Below 130</td>
<td>Serious neglect or evidence of academic misconduct</td>
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If you require any type of accommodation, please come and talk with me. Please notify me in writing regarding any potential conflicts between your religious observances and class meetings and assignment due dates.

**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_dishonesty.htm](http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic_dishonesty.htm)

**Required Text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td><strong>Informal Assessment:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Teacher-made tests/Alternative approaches&lt;br&gt;Curriculum Based Measurement</td>
<td>Read Ch. 5, 6&lt;br&gt;IRIS module: Classroom Assessment Part 1 <a href="http://www.iriscenter.com/gpm/chalcycle.htm">http://www.iriscenter.com/gpm/chalcycle.htm</a>&lt;br&gt;Obtain parent permission for observation&lt;br&gt;Begin observation of student for Student Report #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16</td>
<td><strong>Formal/Standardized Assessment:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Norm-referenced tests&lt;br&gt;Criterion-referenced tests&lt;br&gt;Achievement &amp; Cognitive Ability Discrepancy&lt;br&gt;Technical Skills: Understanding technical aspects of tests and Interpreting data</td>
<td>Read Ch. 3, 4&lt;br&gt;Collect CBM data for Student Report #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.23</td>
<td><strong>Test Interpretation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Report Writing</td>
<td>Read Ch. 7, 8, 13&lt;br&gt;Interpret data and draft Student Report #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td><strong>General Considerations: School Performance and Learning Aptitude</strong></td>
<td>Student Report #1 due in drop box 3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td><strong>General Considerations: Specific Learning Disabilities and Response to Intervention (RtI)</strong></td>
<td>Read Kavale, Fletcher (Both posted)&lt;br&gt;IRIS module: RtI Part 1 (Overview) <a href="http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rti01_overview/chalcycle.htm">http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rti01_overview/chalcycle.htm</a>&lt;br&gt;Check out WJIII materials&lt;br&gt;Administer assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30</td>
<td><strong>Academic Areas: Reading</strong></td>
<td>Student Report #2 due in drop box 3.30&lt;br&gt;Read Ch. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Academic Area</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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| 4.6  | Academic Areas: Written/Oral Language | Read Ch. 10, 11  
IRIS module: Improving Writing Performance  
| 4.13 | Academic Areas: Math | Read Ch. 12 & Stecker (Posted)  
Select and check out final assessment instrument  
Administer assessment |
| 4.20 | Presenting and Applying Assessment Results  
Determining eligibility  
Developing and monitoring program | TBA |
| 4.27 | Special Considerations: Families, Early Childhood & Transition  
Writing Consultancies | Student Report #3 due in drop box 5.2  
Read Ch. 17, 18, 19  
Select and review article (using provided format as guide)  
Develop basic PPT to share review |
| 5.4  | Article Reviews | Article Review/PPT due in class |
| 5.11 | No class | |
| 5.18 | Final Exam | |