



FAST TRAIN Programs

EDCI 520.60R Assessment of Language Learners FAST TRAIN, Spring 2012

Instructor: Edith Collins, instructor FASTTRAIN Programs

Location: Tuesdays, 5 pm to 7:45 pm, Osbourn High School, Manassas VA, Room 1026

Office Hours: Following class meetings or by arrangement

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Course Description

This graduate course provides an introduction to basic principles and current and innovative approaches to **classroom-based assessment of language learning students in ESL, bilingual education, foreign language, and grade-level classrooms in Grades PK-12, Adult Education, and University programs.** The principles introduced in this course *are also applicable to native speakers of English in general education classrooms.*

Among the topics examined are: applying research on language acquisition and teaching to instruction and assessment; embedding assessment of oral language, reading, and writing in daily instruction to monitor student progress; setting assessment purpose; ensuring reliability and validity; scaffolding assessments in the content areas; designing and using portfolios; using assessment as feedback for learning; developing scoring rubrics and other performance-based assessments; engaging students in peer and self-assessment; improving grading practices; reviewing language proficiency tests; assessing language learners with special needs; writing multiple-choice tests; using criterion-referenced vs. norm-referenced testing; and preparing students to take standardized tests.

Graduate students will have opportunities to both critically examine assessment tools

used in current practice and to develop their own. **This course is required for both ESL and Foreign Language teacher licensure as well as for the endorsement of teachers who are currently licensed. It meets or exceeds NCATE, TESOL and ACTFL Standards for Teacher Preparation in Assessment.**

Course Objectives

Teachers/graduate students completing EDCI 520 will be able to:

1. ***Compare purposes, advantages, and limitations*** of standardized tests to those of alternative assessments; compare purposes, advantages, and limitations of standardized tests to those of alternative assessments;
2. ***Define concepts and terminology*** used in traditional assessment and in innovative approaches to assessment;
3. ***Critically review language proficiency assessment measures*** for validity, reliability, and cultural bias, and make recommendations for use with English and foreign language learning students (and native speakers of English);
4. ***Identify issues in assessment of language learners with special needs***, such as learning disabilities or gifted and talented;
5. ***Critically examine and develop assessment procedures and tools*** for (a) the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and (b) the content areas;
6. ***Link assessment to instruction*** by designing a variety of assessments that are embedded within instructional activities;
7. ***Draft clear and objective performance criteria*** for language learning;
8. ***Add scaffolding to assessment and instruction*** for language learners and at-risk learners;
9. ***Draft a student assessment portfolio*** and involve learners in self-assessment; and
10. ***Prepare language learning students to take standardized tests.***

Students will be asked to use a personal computer for preparing course requirements, for accessing Blackboard, and for contacting the instructor and classmates through email.

Blackboard: Each student will access Blackboard using *his/her GMU email login name and password* to access additional class info: <http://gmu.blackboard.com>

Instructional approaches include: Whole class mini-lectures and demonstrations, workshops, small group and peer feedback sessions, field projects, videos, and homework assignments for applying principles discussed in texts and class. *Interacting in meaningful ways with other graduate students/teachers during each class session is essential for success in this course.* Student reports and projects will be evaluated using performance-based, criterion-referenced scoring rubrics.

GSE 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/>].

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that *all students* abide by the following principles:

GMU – CEHD Professional Performance Criteria

Dispositions for a Career Educator

The Virginia Department of Education promotes maintaining standards of professional competence and requires applicants for licensure to possess good moral character. Students must meet CEHD grading standards and course requirements as well as *demonstrate professional performance* in the areas required of professional educators: communication, collaboration and professionalism. Therefore, the College of Education and Human Development expects its students to develop and exhibit the following:

- I. Commitment to the Profession**
 - a. Promoting exemplary practice
 - b. Excellence in teaching and learning
 - c. Advancing the profession
 - d. Engagement in partnerships

- II. Commitment to Honoring Professional Ethical Standards**
 - a. Fairness
 - b. Honesty
 - c. Integrity
 - d. Trustworthiness
 - e. Confidentiality
 - f. Respect for Colleagues and students

- III. Commitment to Key Elements of Professional Knowledge**
 - a. Belief that all individuals have the potential for growth and learning
 - b. Persistence in helping individuals succeed
 - c. High standards
 - d. Safe and supportive learning environments
 - e. Systematic planning
 - f. Intrinsic motivation
 - g. Reciprocal, active learning
 - h. Continuous, integrated assessment
 - i. Critical thinking
 - j. Thoughtful, responsive listening
 - k. Active, supportive interactions
 - l. Technology-supported learning
 - m. Research-based practices
 - n. Respect for diverse talents, abilities and perspectives
 - o. Authentic and relevant learning

- IV. Commitment to Being a Member of a Learning Community**
 - a. Professional dialogue

- b. Self-improvement
 - c. Collective improvement
 - d. Reflective practice
 - e. Responsibility
 - f. Flexibility
 - g. Collaboration
 - h. Continuous, lifelong learning
- V. Commitment to Democratic Values and Social Justice**
- a. Understanding systemic issues the prevent full participation
 - b. Awareness of practices that promote equity and access
 - c. Respects the opinion and dignity of others
 - d. Appreciates and integrates multiple perspectives

Reference: Virginia DOE, INTASC, NEA Code of Ethics, Graduate School of Education. Adopted by GSE – May 2004

Course Policies

Inclement Weather/Emergency Policy

In case of bad weather, or security emergencies, call 993-1000 (or www.gmu.edu) and Manassas Public Schools announcement for information on class cancellations and university closings.

Attendance Policy

FAST TRAIN students are expected to attend **ALL** class periods of courses for which they register. In class participation is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as a whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation and as a result, lower the grade as stated in the course syllabus (Mason catalog).

Cell Phones: Students are required to keep all cell phones turned off/silent during class

GMU E-mail: Web: www.gmu.edu/email

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly (Mason catalog).

Honor Code

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work (Mason catalog).

To ensure clarification on this matter the following terms are provided:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is using an author's exact words as they appear in print without using quotation marks and/or without citing the author in your paper. Plagiarism is unethical and illegal and goes against the GMU Honor Code. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a rating of 1 and a note to the Dean's office. ***Avoid using authors' exact words at all;*** instead, paraphrase in your own words. Your papers are too short to submit somebody else's words.

Double dipping: Projects or papers submitted for credit in one course cannot also be used for a grade in a different course.

Honor Code: Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty members have a responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the learning and testing process. They should explain at the beginning of each semester what would be considered an integrity violation in their courses. Special attention should be given to the subject of plagiarism. Faculty members may actively proctor exams in situations that they believe warrant it.

At the beginning of each semester, faculty members have the responsibility of explaining to their classes their policy regarding the Honor Code. They must also explain the extent to which aid, if any, is permitted on academic work.

Course Withdrawal with Dean Approval

For graduate and non-degree students, withdrawal after the last day for dropping a course requires approval by the student's academic dean, and is permitted only for nonacademic reasons that prevent course completion (Mason catalog).

Incomplete (IN): This grade may be given to students who are passing a course but who may be unable to complete scheduled course work for a cause beyond reasonable control. The student must then complete all the requirements by the end of the ninth week of the next semester, not including summer term, and the instructor must turn in the final grade by the end of the 10th week. Unless an explicit written extension is filed with the Registrar's Office by the faculty deadline, the grade of IN is changed by the registrar to an F. (Mason catalog); Faculty may grant an incomplete with a contract developed by the student with a reasonable time to complete the course at the discretion of the faculty member. The faculty member does not need to allow up to the following semester for the student to complete the course. A copy of the contract should be provided to the FAST TRAIN office.

Course Requirements

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| 1. Student Demonstrations | 10% | Student (teams) guided classroom discussion/activity of assigned readings*
(Classes 4, 6, 9, 11) |
| 2. Scaffolding Project | 25% | Add scaffolding to assessment activities.
(Due Class 7, March 6) |
| 3. Field Project | 30% | Design & pilot test an assessment activity; or analyze current practice & make recommendations; or administer & critique a standardized test.
(Due Class 11, April 10) |
| 4. Classroom Based Assessment | 35% | Develop Performance-Based Assessments.
(Due Class 14, May 1) <i>This assignment is the Performance Based Assessment for the course and must be uploaded to Taskstream where it will be graded by the instructor.</i> |

**Student led discussion of assigned readings which should include examples of student work to help guide the class in understanding the information presented.*

Textbooks

Required Texts

- O'Malley, J. M. and Valdez, Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners: Practical approaches for teachers*. New York: Longman.
- Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teacher*, 2nd Ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Texts

- R. Stiggins, J. Arter, J. Chappius, & S. Chappius. (2007). *Classroom assessment for student learning*. Educational Testing Service, Alexandria, VA: Prentice-Hall.
- Wormeli, R. (2006). *Fair isn't always equal: Assessing & grading in the differentiated classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Any additional readings for class discussion from books or articles will be provided on-line or in class by the instructor.

Class Schedule

Prepare to discuss the assigned readings during the week in which they appear.

Session/ Date	Topics & Assigned Readings
1: Jan 24	<p><i>Syllabus: Objectives, Requirements, Course projects.</i></p> <p>Topic introduction: Discussion of different types of assessments, limitations and strengths of traditional and performance-based assessments, importance of assessment purpose, validity and reliability. Beneficial backwash.</p> <p><i>Readings</i> O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, Ch. 1; Hughes, Chs. 1-3</p>
2: Jan 31	<p>SCAFFOLDING ASSESSMENTS. <i>Approaches to scaffolding assessments. Scaffolding workshop. Scaffolding Project.</i></p> <p><i>Readings</i> O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, Ch. 2</p>
3: Feb 7	<p>ISSUES IN ASSESSMENT OF WRITING. What are the best ways to assess writing? Language proficiency and program placement WIDA Access for ELLs. WIDA W-APT. WIDA MODEL.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>*Sign up for CBA Final Project</u></p> <p><i>Readings</i> O'M & VP, Ch. 6; Hughes, Ch. 9; www.wida.us (Explore and read details for your grade level/subject on the WIDA web site.)</p>
4: Feb 14	<p>TOOLS FOR ASSESSMENT OF WRITING. Using anchor papers and rubrics to assess writing. Holistic scoring rubrics.</p> <p><u>*Student team guided discussion activity of the topic</u> NOTE: Student presenters will locate one professional journal article and/or book chapter on this topic and bring it to class to discuss.</p> <p><i>Readings</i> Review O'M & VP, Ch. 6; Hughes, Chs. 9</p>

<p>5: Feb 21</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p>	<p>ASSESSMENT OF ORAL LANGUAGE. What is oral language? How do you assess oral language? ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking. Holistic scoring rubrics.</p> <p><i>O'M & VP, Ch. 4; Hughes, Chs. 10 & 12</i></p>
<p>6: Feb 28</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p>	<p>ASSESSMENT OF READING. What works in reading instruction and assessment? DRA, DRP, QRI, SOL, VGLA. Cloze tests. Running Records. Anecdotal Records. Miscue Analysis. Common Test Techniques.</p> <p>*Student team guided discussion activity of the topic NOTE: Student presenters will locate one professional journal article and/or book chapter on this topic and bring it to class to discuss.</p> <p><i>O'M & VP, Ch. 5; Hughes, Ch. 11</i></p>
<p>7: Mar 6</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p>	<p><i>DUE today: Scaffolding Project</i></p> <p>SCORING RUBRICS. Rubric design. Analytic rubrics. Holistic rubric. Exploding a holistic scoring rubric.</p> <p><i>Midterm Course Evaluation forms.</i></p> <p><i>Review and read information about scoring rubrics in O'M & VP (see index)</i></p>
<p>8: Mar 20</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p>	<p>PEER AND SELF- ASSESSMENT. The critical relationship between self-assessment & achievement. Validity & reliability revisited.</p> <p><i>Review and read information about peer and self-assessment in O'M & VP (see index); Re-read Hughes, Chs. 4-5</i></p>
<p>9: Mar 27</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p>	<p>ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTENT AREAS. Common testing techniques. Writing multiple choice questions. Assessing language and vocabulary vs. content knowledge. Grading policies.</p> <p>*Student team guided discussion activity of the topic NOTE: Student presenters will locate one professional journal article and/or book chapter on this topic and bring it to class to discuss.</p> <p><i>O'M & VP, Ch. 7; Hughes, Chs. 7-8</i></p>

10: Apr 3	GRADING POLICIES: CLASS DISCUSSION VIA BLACKBOARD. See discussion questions on Blackboard. Please respond thoughtfully to the questions. WORK TIME ON PROJECTS. (A suggestion to take this week to get some work done on your own ☺)
<i>Readings</i>	<i>O'M & VP, Ch. 2 (pp. 29-31);</i>
11: Apr 10	<i>DUE today: Field Project</i> ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING DISABILITIES AND GIFTED AND TALENTED LEARNERS. What does valid & reliable assessment look like? <u>*Student team guided discussion activity of the topic</u> NOTE: Student presenters will locate one professional journal article and/or book chapter on this topic and bring it to class to discuss.
<i>Readings</i>	
12: Apr 17	PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT. Types of portfolios. Essential elements of portfolios. Managing portfolios. <i>Students will bring a student portfolio sample to be used in class (Portfolio Planning Workshop).</i>
<i>Readings</i>	<i>O'M & VP, Ch. 3</i>
13: Apr 24	TEACHER COLLABORATION FOR CREATING ASSESSMENTS. Importance of teacher collaboration to ensure valid and reliable assessments. Articles will be provided by instructor for class of this topic.
14: May 1	<i>DUE Today: Final Project</i> Share CBA Final Project (via computer and LCD projector). <i>Final Course Evaluation Forms. Materials Release Forms. GMU FAST TRAIN Course evaluations.</i>

The topics listed for each class meeting are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Additional readings for class discussion will be provided for you by the instructor during class and will be available in class and/or on-line.

Standards

Objectives and activities for this course will help teacher meet or exceed standards established by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE).

The following TESOL Professional Standards for ESL PreK-12 Teacher Licensure are met in this course:

Domain 1: Language

Domain 2: Culture

Domain 3: Planning, Implementing, & Managing Instruction

Domain 4: Assessment

Domain 5: Professionalism

DOMAIN 4: ASSESSMENT

Candidates understand issues of assessment and use standards-based assessment measures with ESOL students.

Standard 4.a. Issues of Assessment for ESL: Candidates understand various issues of assessment (e.g., cultural and linguistic bias; political, social, and psychological factors) in assessment, IQ, and special education testing (including gifted and talented); the importance of standards; and the difference between language proficiency and other types of assessment (e.g., standardized achievement tests of overall mastery), as they affect ESOL student learning.

Standard 4.b. Language Proficiency Assessment: Candidates know and use a variety of standards-based language proficiency instruments to inform their instruction and understand their uses for identification, placement, and demonstration of language growth of ESOL students.

Standard 4.c. Classroom-Based Assessment for ESL: Candidates know and use a variety of performance-based assessment tools and techniques to inform instruction.

To see detailed descriptions of TESOL Domains, Standards, performance indicators, and rating scales, please see entire document at:

<http://www.ncate.org/documents/ProgramStandards/tesol.pdf>.

The Professional Development Portfolio