

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY COURSE SYLLABUS

NOTE: The syllabus is subject to change in response to student needs and topics of interest that emerge.

EDUC 4770.01 Assessing Young Children

Fall 2004 Term 1

Dr. Cheryl Breig-Allen

Thursday 5:00-9:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION (Student Focus, Rationale, Scope)

This course addresses the assessment of young children from birth to age eight. The assessment process takes into account the whole child: cognition, communication, sensory, perceptual, motor, social/emotional development within the context of family, school and cultural environments. Emphasis is on the use of observation and authentic assessment strategies to evaluate learning. Analyzing and interpreting assessment results to enhance learning outcomes and determine program effectiveness is also a key component of this course. **Students must have access to children.**

LEARNING OUTCOMES (Goals and Objectives)

1. Understand normal growth and development of children from birth to age eight (MoStep 2a).
2. Understand the processes by which children learn (MoStep 2d).
3. Understand the impact of the environment, family and culture on development and assessment (MoStep 3d).
4. Understand the importance of observation in the assessment process (MoStep 3a).
5. Implement appropriate observation strategies when conducting an assessment (MoStep 3a).
6. Understand and implement authentic assessment strategies when conducting an assessment (MoStep 4c).
7. Evaluate assessment information to determine, monitor and enhance children's learning outcomes (MoStep 3b).
8. Understand the legal and ethical issues surrounding assessment.
9. Communicate assessment results with appropriate persons (MoStep 3c).
10. Understand the importance and reason for Child Find and the screening process (MoStep 3c).
11. Incorporate portfolios as a means of assessing pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and primary age children (MoStep 4c).
12. Include families as partners in the assessment process (MoStep 3d).

TEXTS

McAfee, O. & Leong, D. (2002) (3rd edition). Assessing and guiding young children's development and learning. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Wortham, S.C. (2001) (3rd edition). Assessment in early childhood education. Columbus OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Additional readings may be distributed during class sessions. Be prepared to discuss readings in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Child Assessment Plan

Students will develop an authentic child assessment plan for cognitive and language development. (See Appendix A in McAfee and Leong.) Develop at least two goals in each area and two objectives for each goal. Students will then implement, summarize and interpret the data and information gathered from the assessment plan, citing noteworthy sources. Students will submit a reflection paper using the following framework to reflect upon their work with the children. Papers will be evaluated in terms of the quality of thought, organization, and integration of resources.

Part 1

Goals/Hypotheses/Questions:

- What do you intend for children to learn? What will they gain from this experience?;
- What questions do you have about children's learning processes and thoughts that might be answered through this experience?; and
- You may identify potential learning outcomes in a more specific way through the statement of objectives.

Projected Plans, Strategies, and Procedures:

- Selection and organization of materials, tools, and containers to be used by children;
- Organization and preparation of the environment (Consider time, flow of activity, organization of furniture arrangement of teacher and children in space, etc.);
- Preparation of children and/or parents (e.g., note sent home about upcoming study or a note to request that the child bring something or do something in preparation for the experience);
- Selection of children who will participate;
- Questions, comments, or memories that you might share with children to help them reflect and reconnect with prior learning or experiences that are related to the experience at hand;
- Procedures.

Outline Due 9/16

Part 2

Plans for Documentation and Assessment:

- What kinds of documentation will enable you to examine behavior and achievements related to the goals, hypotheses, questions, and/or intended learning objectives?;
- What methods of observation would be most useful and feasible (e.g., running records, time sampling, interviews, video recording, audio recording, or photographs)?;
- What tools/technology is needed? (e.g., video camera, tape recorder, paper and pencil, clip boards, still camera)?;
- Who will collect or record the observations?; and
- How will you coordinate your plans with other teachers?

Reflection and Implementation:

- Examine documentation/assessment data;
- Reflect upon and analyze these records in regard to the goals, hypotheses, questions, and/or intended learning objectives; and
- Look for other significant outcomes that may have been unanticipated.

Possible Implications for Future Work with These Children and Future Teaching Situations:

- Discuss possible implications for future work with these children.
- Discuss what you learned that might be applied in future teaching situations.

Outline Due 9/30

Final Paper Due 11/14

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance will be taken and penalties imposed for excessive absences. A no credit is given to anyone missing more than one class.

WRITTEN WORK

Assignments are due at class time on the date specified. Failure to turn in a paper on time can result in a penalty of one grade. Assignments are expected to follow APA format and be free of mechanical, typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors.

READING AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Reading assignments will be given for each class. Chapters from texts should be read prior to class lecture and discussion on that topic. Students are responsible for all materials for all materials as assigned. Class participation is strongly encouraged as we all have experiences from which others can learn. We need to build and construct our knowledge as we proceed through this course.

COURSE CALENDAR

- 8/26 Comprehensive assessment system for birth through age eight
Factors contributing to changes in assessment
Legal and ethical issues in assessment
Read: McAfee, Chapters 1 and 2.
Wortham, Chapters 1 and 2.
- 9/2 Basic concepts of measurement
Why, what and when to assess
Testing in the right place
Standardized Testing
Read: McAfee, Chapters 3 and 10.
Wortham, Chapters 3 and 4.
- 9/9 Methods for gathering information and data
Parents as partners in assessment
Observation in the assessment process
Recording information and data
Read: McAfee, Chapters 4 and 5.
Wortham, Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8.
- 9/16 Alternative assessment strategies
Summarizing assessment information
Interpreting assessment information
Read: McAfee, Chapters 6 and 7.
Part 1 of Child Assessment Plan Due
- 9/23 Using assessment information to plan individual and classroom strategies in pre-k, kindergarten and primary grades
Read: McAfee, Chapters 8 and 9.
Wortham, Chapter 9.
- 9/30 Communicating assessment results
Read: McAfee, Chapter 11.
Wortham, Chapter 10.
Part 2 of Child Assessment Plan Due
- 10/7 Assessing infants
Contemporary issues in assessment
Read: McAfee, Chapter 11.
- 10/14 Presentations
Final Paper Due