

Evaluation of the Elementary/Middle School
EDEC 7170/EDMS 7100

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Course Description

At a time when assessment of students, teachers, and schools is at the forefront of policy and political conversations related to education, it is important to pause and consider what it actually means to assess students, teachers, and schools and to what ends these assessments might serve. This pause is particularly important now -- a time when assessment is often used synonymously with high-stakes standardized testing.

While this course will include assessment of teachers and school programs, it will focus primarily on classroom-based assessment of student learning as open, inviting acts in which teacher and student attempt to enter into a pedagogic relationship with one another around the student's learning. To this end, we will pursue questions such as:

- What does it mean to say someone “understands” something?
- How does a teacher recognize a student's apparent lack of understanding and remain open to what the student might understand?
- What tools, strategies, and processes help facilitate this type of classroom-based assessment?
- How might teachers, through their classroom-based assessment practices, negotiate their pedagogical commitments to children in an age of high-stakes testing?

Our Project – Knowledge for Teaching

Our work in this course will be imagined much like Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) imagine a knowledge base for teaching - “one that is not designed so that teachers function simply as objects of study and recipients of knowledge but also function as architects of study and generators of knowledge” (p. 2).

My Pedagogy

My pedagogy is democratic as long as democracy is in keeping with Hartoonian and Lensmire. For Hartoonian, democracy is essentially an argument (at times a paradox) between value tensions such as diversity and unity. Democracy, then, is contested and never finished. For Lensmire, democracy is what John Dewey called “a way of life — a way of life that embodies a generous belief in the possibilities of human nature and that entails the obligation to work to create the conditions that would allow human capacities to develop and flourish” (retrieved August 6, 2007 at <http://www.education.umn.edu/CI/Faculty/Lensmire.html>)

To these ends, I aim to teach democratically. For me, this means that I will try to create conditions and opportunities for you to identify and in turn pursue something you find desirable. This, of course, must fall within the frame of the course. However, the frame is a value tension of sorts in that it provides parameters, but hopefully does not stifle or limit (too much) what you want to take up. The best image I have for this frame is a rubber band. It can be stretched, moved, adjusted – as long as the rubber band does not break.

From a methodological perspective, I will attempt to exercise a pedagogy that focuses on dialogue and deliberation- allowing for divergent viewpoints and shared learning. In a practical sense, this pedagogy will include a significant amount of small and large group talk, some lecture and a few workshop-oriented segments.

Required Readings

Reeves, D. (2007). *Ahead of the curve: The power of assessment to transform teaching and learning*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Note: There will also be required readings posted on WEBCT throughout the semester.

Tentative Schedule

(Note: This syllabus is a guide for the course. It is subject to change as we progress through the semester. You will be notified in advance of any changes.)

Date	Guiding Question or Topic	Class Preparation/ Assignments Due
August 21	Introduction to the Course – Who are we? How has our learning been assessed? How have we assessed others’ learning? Syllabus Assessment Walk	
August 28	Assessment of Teachers	Read: WebCT – Teacher Observation Forms Write: Assessment Walk #1 due (follow protocol)
September 4	Assessment of Teachers	Read: WebCT – Saphier Readings and <i>Ahead of the Curve</i> , the Introduction and Chapter 1
September 11	Assessment of School Programs	Read: <i>Ahead of the Curve</i> , Chapters 4 & 5 Write: Reader Response #1 due
September 18	What does it mean to say someone “understands” something?	Read: WebCT – “What is understanding?” Write: Teacher Assessment Protocol Due
September 25	How does a teacher recognize a student’s apparent lack of	Read: WebCT—“To Recognize” and <i>Ahead of the Curve</i> , Chapters 2 and 9

	<p>understanding and remain open to what the student might understand?</p> <p>Assessment Walk</p>	
October 2	<p>What tools, strategies, and processes help facilitate this type of classroom-based assessment?</p>	<p>Read: <i>Ahead of the Curve</i>, Chapters 3 and 6</p> <p>Write: Assessment Walk #2 due</p>
October 9	<p>What tools, strategies, and processes help facilitate this type of classroom-based assessment?</p>	<p>Read: <i>Ahead of the Curve</i>, Chapters 7 and 8</p> <p>Write: Reader Response #2 due</p>
October 16	<p>How might teachers, through their classroom-based assessment practices, negotiate their pedagogical commitments to children in an age of high-stakes testing?</p> <p>Co-Construction of the Content for the Remainder of the Course</p>	<p>Read: <i>Ahead of the Curve</i>, Chapter 11 and the Epilogue</p> <p>Write: Assessment Strategy – Part I Due</p>
October 23	<p>Co-Construction Theme #1</p> <p>Assessment Walk</p>	<p>Read: To Be Determined</p>
October 30	<p>Co-Construction Theme #2</p> <p>Assessment Strategy – Part II</p> <p>Assessment Walk</p>	<p>Read: To Be Determined</p> <p>Write: Assessment Walk #3 due</p>

November 6	Co-Construction Theme #3 Assessment Strategy – Part II	Read: To Be Determined Write: Reader Response #3 due
November 13	Co-Construction Theme #4 Assessment Strategy – Part II	Read: To Be Determined
November 20	Co-Construction Theme #5 Assessment Strategy- Part II	Read: To Be Determined
November 27	No Class—Thanksgiving Break	
December 4	Designated Work Session for Portfolios	Write: Assessment Portfolios Due (12/8)

Summary of Assignments

(Note: The summaries below are general descriptions of the course assignments. I will distribute more specific descriptions throughout the semester as appropriate.)

Participation

We have to read (seriously, thoughtfully, and carefully) and be prepared to talk with one another each class session in order for this class to work. In addition, during our second class session we will determine what we think it looks and sounds like to actively participate in class. Based on our determinations we will then co-construct the attributes by which your participation will be assessed.

Journal

- **Assessment Walks (3 total)**

We will go on some walks together and individually in order to see (where, what, how, and why) assessment might reside in various places in the community. You will write an entry following each walk. Each journal entry should be a ½ single-spaced word processed page. Please submit each journal entry to me via email.

- **Reader Responses (3 total)**

The purpose(s) of the reader response journal entries is to work through the questions/ideas/concerns/wonderings you have related to the course readings and to prepare you for class discussions. Each journal entry should be ½ single-spaced word processed page. Please submit each journal entry to me via email.

Teacher Assessment Protocol

The purpose of this assignment is to reflect on how you think teachers might or should be assessed FOR teacher learning. To this end you will design a lesson observation guide, a mid-year assessment, and an end of year evaluation that could be used for practicing teachers. You will write a rationale for your protocol. This assignment is due **September 18**.

Assessment Strategy – Part I

The purpose of this assignment is to gain experience designing an effective classroom-based assessment to use in your practice. Using Stiggins' (2007) four keys to quality assessments, you will design the assessment based on something of interest to you and your students (or future students). You will also be asked to connect the assessment strategy with instructional decisions and strategies. This assignment is due **October 16**.

Assessment Strategy – Part II

The purpose of this assignment is to teach your colleagues how to use your assessment strategy. Your teaching will be 20-30 minutes in length and you will provide your colleagues with handouts and materials they can adapt and use in their practice. You will present on one of four dates – **October 30, November 6, 13, or 20**.

Assessment Portfolio

This assignment will serve as the culminating assessment for the course. A more specific protocol will be distributed in class. Generally speaking, however, the portfolio can take a number of forms (e.g., 3-ring binder, Powerpoint, website, other multimedia presentation). The portfolio will include your journal entries, your teacher assessment protocol, and all assessment strategies presented in class. In addition, you will write a “Classroom Assessment Philosophy” statement that will reference the authors we read throughout the semester and “Assessment-in-Practice” statements for each section of the portfolio. Your portfolio is due on **December 8**.

Evaluation of Student Performance

Ann Davies (2007) contends that when “evaluative feedback is decreased, and specific, descriptive feedback is increased, students learn more” (p. 33). The specific, descriptive feedback to which Davies refers is often termed formative assessment, because it is forward looking and aims to constantly promote student learning. Davies suggests that this type of feedback actually “feeds-forward.” It can be said, then, that assessments should serve, primarily, as beginnings rather than endings.

To these ends, your work will be assessed primarily in a formative manner and to a lesser degree in a summative (evaluative) manner. You will receive specific, descriptive audio “feed-forward” and a letter grade for each assignment. You can choose to revise and resubmit any assignment based on your audio feed-forward to improve a letter grade, as long as your revisions are submitted no later than one week after you receive the audiofile.

There are no points for assignments. Instead, a description of the attributes which constitute letter grades will be provided (e.g., A means...). For some assignments, we will co-construct the description of the attributes. Your final course grade will be based on a holistic assessment of all assignments you complete throughout the semester. Here are the possible letter grades: A; A-; B+; B; B-; C+; C; C-; F

Extra work submitted to enhance a course grade will not be accepted.

Late Assignments – Submitting your work after the deadline may influence your course grade. If for some reason you need an extension contact me.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance is imperative.

1. Notify me prior to any absence.
2. Being late to class or leaving early three times is equivalent to missing one class meeting.
3. Students are excused for religious holidays.
4. You are responsible for all class meetings (e.g. assignments, content) whether present or not.
5. In the event you are absent, you will be required to complete an alternative assignment.
6. Absences may affect your final course grade.

Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia's policies on academic honesty are strictly enforced in this class (see the UGA Graduate Bulletin). Please familiarize yourself with these policies.

Equity and Accessibility

It is my goal to fully include everyone in our classroom. If you have any special circumstances that you believe may affect your performance in class or on the course requirements, please meet with me to make the necessary accommodations. I will try to maintain complete confidentiality of any information that you choose to share with me.



The University of Georgia

College of Education Conceptual Framework

The College of Education prepares exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community; it achieves that end through teaching, scholarship, outreach, and partnership at the local, national, and international levels.



NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSOCIATION
...devoted to improving the educational experiences of young adolescents

National Middle School Association Masters Level Teacher Preparation Standards for EDMS 7100

Standard 2. Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research underlying the philosophical foundations and organizational components of highly effective middle level schools, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Have a comprehensive understanding of the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools.
3. Comprehend the rationale and characteristic components of developmentally responsive middle level schools.
5. Understand that the team process is the most effective strategy for school improvement and student learning.

Standard 3. Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to middle level curriculum and assessment, and they apply that knowledge in the practice.

Knowledge:

Middle level masters candidates:

2. Know how to select and adapt curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessments that maximize student learning.
11. Understand effective curriculum assessment strategies and how to use that knowledge to maximize student learning.

Standard 4. Middle Level Teaching Fields

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, heories, standards, and research related to their teaching field(s), and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

4. Are knowledgeable about teaching and assessment strategies that are effective in their teaching fields.

Standard 5. Middle Level Instruction and Assessment

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to effective middle level instruction and assessment, and they apply a variety of effective strategies to meet the varying abilities, interests, and learning styles of all young adolescents.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Understand the principles of instruction and assessment, including the theories and research that support them.

2. Know a wide variety of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies that are developmentally responsive, culturally sensitive, and technologically sound, and when to implement them.
3. Understand that teaching higher order thinking skills is an integral part of instruction and assessment.
5. Know how to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies.
7. Know how to establish and maintain a fair, effective, and developmentally responsive classroom environment.
9. Understand and analyze the multiple roles of assessment in the instructional process (e.g. monitoring learning, evaluating student progress, and modifying teaching strategies).
10. Participate in professional development activities that increase their knowledge of effective teaching/learning and assessment strategies.
11. Establish, maintain, and promote fair, effective, and positive learning environments for all young adolescents.
12. Employ effective, developmentally responsive classroom management.

Standard 6. Family and Community Involvement

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to working collaboratively with family and community members, and they provide leadership in helping all stakeholders offer high quality learning opportunities for all young adolescents.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

4. Know how to communicate effectively with family and community members.
7. Know what kinds of information can and should be shared with family and community members and what should remain private and confidential.

Standard 7. Middle Level Professional Roles

Middle level masters candidates understand and analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to their professional roles in middle level education, and they apply that knowledge in their practice.

Knowledge

Middle level masters candidates:

1. Understand their role as middle level education professionals.
2. Understand the importance of their influence on all young adolescents.
3. Understand their responsibility for upholding high professional standards (e.g., school, community).
8. Understand the need for continual reflection on young adolescent development, the instructional process, and professional relationships.
9. Are knowledgeable about the skills of research/data based decision making.