

EMAT 6990
Research Seminar in Mathematics Education
Fall 2005

Instructor: Denise S. Mewborn
Office: Aderhold 109A
Phones: 542-4548 (office)
e-mail: dmewborn@uga.edu

Course Overview

The purpose of this seminar is to provide you with an opportunity to engage in reading about and discussing a contemporary issue in mathematics education. This semester the topic is assessment, which is timely in light of accountability issues in public education these days.

The objectives of this course are for you to:

- develop an understanding of standardized assessment issues;
- develop an understanding of and some expertise with classroom assessments that provide a gauge of student learning.

Text

Bush, W. S., & Greer, A. S. (1999). *Mathematics assessment: A practical handbook for grades 9-12*. Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (ISBN 0-87353-476-X)

OR

Bush, W. S., & Leinwand, S. (1999). *Mathematics assessment: A practical handbook for grades 6-8*. Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (ISBN 0-87353-481-6)

Attendance

Attendance and participation are essential in this class, both for you to learn and so that others may benefit from your input. Attendance is expected because most of class time will be spent on group discussions, and the ideas and concepts presented cannot easily be transmitted through class notes. You are responsible for all announcements made in class even if you are not there. It is important that you arrive in a prompt and timely fashion.

Course Requirements

- Attend all class meetings unless you discuss your circumstances with me in advance.
- Come to each class session prepared to discuss the assigned material, which means that you have carefully read and given thought to the readings.
- Participate in the class in a respectful manner (see class participation guidelines below).
- Complete all assignments on time.
 - You will be asked to write 3 short papers (~500 words each) in response to material we read for class. Topics and due dates will be announced in class.
 - In lieu of 5 class periods (Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 7, Nov. 21, Dec. 5) you should propose something that you will do that will benefit your professional development.

The final product of whatever you do will be ~1000 word paper. Things you might propose to do include:

- Try an open-ended assessment task with your class and analyze the results.
- Develop a set of open-ended assessment items for a particular topic or course.
- Attend the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics annual meeting October 20-22 (http://www.gctm.org/georgia_mathematics_conference.htm).

If you are enrolled for two credits, a satisfactory grade will be based on the above plus a 6-8 page review of portions of the book *Assessment in the Mathematics Classroom*. Read 2 chapters from Part 1: Mathematics Classroom Assessment in General, all of the chapters from either Part 3: Grades 5-8 Assessment OR Part 4: Grades 9-12 Assessment, and 1 chapter from Part 5: Classroom Assessment Issues to Think About. In your review, include such things as the following:

- What were the authors' main points?
- How do the authors' ideas connect to or diverge from "real" classrooms?
- What did you learn from reading this book?
- Why might you recommend this book (or portions of it) to a peer or an administrator in your district? What might they gain from reading it? What would be your reservations about recommending this book to someone else?

This assignment is due Monday, December 5.

All written work for this class should be done on a word processor—double spaced, with reasonable margins (~ 1 inch all around) and a reasonable sized font (10 or 12 point). Please proofread your work carefully before turning it in to me. Use the capabilities of your word processor to check for spelling and grammar errors. Enlist the help of a peer to assist with punctuation and clarity of writing. Your writing should conform to the style specified in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition*. Copies of this manual can be found at the library or can be purchased at the bookstore.

No late assignments will be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances and you make *prior arrangements* with me. You may send your assignments to me as an email attachment if you prefer that to handing in a hard copy. If you use anything other than Microsoft Word, please save the file in Rich Text Format.

The following general guidelines will be used to assess written work:

A Outstanding performance. The assignment is of excellent quality and contains no technical errors. Writing shows evidence of understanding, synthesis, and reflection upon course material.

B Good performance. The assignment is of good quality but not exceptional and contains only minor technical errors. Writing shows evidence of understanding of course material.

C Poor Performance. The assignment is of acceptable quality but contains numerous or serious technical errors. Writing shows incomplete or inconsistent understanding of course material.

D Unacceptable Performance. The assignment is of poor quality and below acceptable standards. Writing does not show evidence of understanding of the course material.

F Lack of performance. The assignment was not completed.

Class participation

In order for everyone to benefit from the discussions and class activities, please exercise the utmost professionalism in your interactions during class. Monitor your participation to be sure that you are not dominating the conversation or are not being shut out of the discussion. Remember that the quality of your participation is more important than the quantity. Be respectful in the way you assert your opinions and ideas and in the way you respond to the ideas and opinions of others. Remember to disagree with ideas, not with people.

The following general guidelines will be used to assess class participation:

- A *Outstanding Contribution.* Insightful and thoughtful comments, questions, and or summary reflecting a careful reading and analysis of the material.
- B *Adequate Contribution.* Comments are accurate but not particularly insightful or thoughtful. Demonstrates an understanding of the readings but not necessarily a very deep or careful analysis.
- C *Marginal Contribution.* Makes little contribution to the class discussion or does a poor job of summarizing/analyzing material. Primarily tells stories, anecdotes, or personal experiences with no analysis or reflection.
- D/F *Unacceptable Contribution.* Contribution below acceptable standards or comes to class having not completed all of the readings.

University policies regarding course withdrawal and the assignment of incomplete grades will be followed. All academic work must meet the standards contained in *A Culture of Honesty*. Each student is responsible for being aware of those standards before performing any academic work. See <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm> for details of the university's academic honesty policy.

Tentative class calendar

Class will meet on

August 22, 29
September 19, 26
October 3, 17, 24, 31
November 14, 28

Class will not meet on

September 5, 12
October 10
November 7, 21
December 5

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.