University of Utah  
Department of Special Education  
Special Education 5021-001  
Principles of Assessment and Data-Based Decision Making  
Fall 2019

Instructor: Vanessa Feola  
Email: vanessa.feola@utah.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Class Time: Tuesday/Thursday 10:45am-12:05pm  
Location: SAEC 2147  
Credit Hours: 3

Required Texts:  
The following texts are required for the course:  

Additional Required Readings:  
The required readings will be made available via Canvas. It is the student’s responsibility to access the appropriate readings for each module throughout the semester. Please see the course calendar for required readings.

Course Description:  
The objectives of this course are designed to help prospective general and special educators develop an understanding of the theoretical and applied foundations of assessment and data-based decision making. Activities, discussions, and projects will concentrate on how to evaluate assessments and use data to determine interventions and instruction for students.

Course Objectives:  
This course provides an introduction to assessment and data-based decision making with an emphasis on utilizing measurement tools that lead to instructional planning. Upon completing this course, students will be able to:  
1. Understand and appropriately use basic academic assessment terminology.  
2. Describe the functions of assessment including screening, diagnostics, eligibility, instructional planning, formative and summative evaluation; and describe the types of decisions made from the assessment data.  
3. Describe the common elements of RTI/MTSS and identify the assessments used at each stage of a typical problem-solving/intervention model.  
4. Graph and interpret assessment data (e.g., for progress monitoring).  
5. Name and describe major laws that are important to educational assessment practices.  
6. Identify legal and ethical issues that arise regarding educational assessment practices and describe a model to resolve such issues.  
7. Describe the legal, ethical, and diversity (language, culture, SES, etc.) issues that must be considered in relation to the selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment devices.  
8. Demonstrate understanding of normative groups, reliability, validity, and test bias as criteria for evaluating educational assessment measures.  
9. Demonstrate understanding of basic quantitative concepts related to scales of measurement, characteristics of sets of scores, average scores, measures of dispersion and correlation.  
10. Demonstrate mastery of different types of scores that can be obtained from tests and the best use of those scores for instructional decisions (i.e., standard scores, age/grade equivalents, percentile ranks).  
11. Compare and contrast types and appropriate uses of formal and informal assessment methods including norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, curriculum-based, and observational/ecological.  
12. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles related to assessing special populations (e.g., students with severe disabilities) in important skill areas (e.g., reading, math, social behavior)  
13. Develop skills in creating quality formative and summative assessments for the classroom.
Course Requirements:

1. **Participation and in-class activities (50 points total)**: Attendance, being prepared by completing the readings listed on the syllabus prior to class, and participation in all in-class activities are very important for you to benefit from this class. Interactions and small group activities depend upon you being thoroughly familiar with the readings and previous class material. To provide students with opportunities to apply principles learned in readings and lecture, learning activities will be given periodically throughout the course. Students will typically work on these activities in class and will be allowed to work in groups. Learning activities will be graded based on careful and considerate participation in completing the activity. We will discuss the outcomes of each activity and students will turn in a completed activity sheet or outcome artifact. **Students who are absent, leave early the day of the learning activity, or who do not participate in the activity will receive no credit, and there will not be opportunities for make-up.** If you miss a class it is your responsibility (not the instructor’s) to obtain all notes, handouts, and assignments missed.

2. **Quizzes (50 points total)**: To help you gain formative feedback on your mastery of the course content, and to ensure accountability for the readings, students will be expected to complete online quizzes. Each quiz will be worth 5 points. Quizzes may cover lecture content from the previous week(s) and the reading assignments for the week assigned. You may take the quiz as many times as you would like before the deadline (QUIZZES WILL LOCK ON FRIDAYS AT 11:59PM). The highest score will be retained for your grade. Quizzes are to be taken independently on Canvas. Each quiz will include a statement that the student completed the quiz independently according to the University of Utah Student Code.

3. **Progress Monitoring Assignment (50 points: 25 points for individual assessments and 25 points for graph and analysis)** To gain experience using progress monitoring processes and understanding formative assessment, students will monitor their own progress over the course of the semester in assessment-related vocabulary. Students will complete a weekly fluency-based test of assessment knowledge at the beginning of most class periods. This is a three-minute fluency test of assessment knowledge. Students will graph and analyze their progress and results. Students will be graded on weekly participation and for completion of the graph and analysis. **Absolute performance (i.e., number correct and incorrect) on the assessments will NOT affect student grades.** Points are given for participation, the graph, and the written analysis.

4. **Exams (50 points each)**: There will be two closed book exams. Simple calculators can be used during the exams (although they are not required). Computers and phones cannot be used during exams. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer items, and essay questions.

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<tr>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and learning activities</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>Progress monitoring</td>
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<td>Exams</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grades:**

Grades will be assigned based on the percentage of points earned by the student based on the following distribution:

- A= 94-100%
- A-=90-93%
- B+=87-89%
- B=84-86%
- C+=77-79%
- C=74-76%
- B-=80-83%
- D=66-69%
- C-=70-73%
- D+=67-69%
- D=60-63%
- E=under 59%

**Policy on Late Work**

Students are expected to submit assignments on the assigned date. If a student is aware of a calendar conflict, he or she must make **PRIOR** arrangements with the instructor. Late submissions without prior arrangements with the instructor will result in a **10% drop in points PER DAY. NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER SEVEN CALENDAR DAYS FROM ITS DUE DATE.**
Policy on Misrepresenting Written Work
Misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own is a violation of University policy. As per the University of Utah Student Code, plagiarism means “the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in, or as a basis for, one’s own work offered for academic consideration or credit or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one’s own, without attribution, any other individual’s words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression.” Sanctions for student plagiarism are at the discretion of the course instructor but may result in a failing grade for the course.

“Person-first” Language
Students are expected to use appropriate language in online discussions and other written work. People with disabilities are just that: people who happen to have physical, sensory, behavioral, or intellectual disabilities. Please avoid phrases like “the handicapped,” “ED kids,” “severely retarded,” “autistic student” or other statements that highlight the disability rather than the individual. Instead, speak and write in a way that puts “people first,” for example, “the student with a severe disability,” “students with behavior disorders.” This small change emphasizes the humanity and individuality of the person and clarifies that disability is only one of many characteristics (and not necessarily the most important!) that people possess.

Professionalism
Students in this course are expected to meet the Fitness to Teach (FIT) criteria and review the Dispositions Document located at:
https://uite.utah.edu/_documents/Fitness%20to%20Teach%202018-2019.pdf

Attendance and Participation
Students are expected to participate in the online environment as well as attend all of the face-to-face class sessions. To maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect, students are asked to not hold conversations while other students, the instructor, or other guest presenters are speaking. If you choose to bring a laptop to class, please maintain its use for note-taking only. Also, students are asked to refrain from engaging in distracting behaviors such as text messaging, finishing last minute assignments or assignments for other classes, sleeping, etc. Finally, students are asked to turn off all cell phones during class unless there is a compelling reason to have them on which has been discussed with the instructor prior to the beginning of class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
The Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

University Safety Statement
The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu

Addressing Sexual Misconduct
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Note: The course calendar will be provided on the first day of class and available on Canvas thereafter.