

EDUC 698V:

Assessment and Design Strategies for Improving Student Learning

Syllabus

Instructor: Davina Pruitt-Mentle
Office: 2127 Tawes
Phone: (301) 405-8202
email: dp151@umail.umd.edu
Website: <http://www.edtechoutreach.umd.edu/>
Office Hours: By appointment
Credits: 3 credits
Time: Fall/Spring 2003

Catalogue Description:

Explore systemic improvement strategies to curriculum planning, assessment, and instruction through utilizing data and data analysis through technology tools. Examine a variety of innovative curriculum design and classroom assessment practices, including instructional rubrics, student self-assessment, ongoing assessment, problem based and backward design models, integrated with the aid of technology applications. Design, test, and revise curriculum projects and assessment tools for use in your own classroom.

Course Description:

As the gap between low and high achieving students continues to grow and the implementation of high-stakes accountability systems becomes the norm, the need for data to guide classroom decisions becomes increasingly important. Unfortunately, many educators have little or no experience in using **data systematically to inform decisions about classroom teaching**. The density and range of available information contributes to the arduous task of effectively analyzing and applying assessment results to decisions about day to day instruction.

This course will introduce graduate level educators/administrators to the process of incorporating data into their continuous school improvement plan. Systemic improvement strategies utilizing data will be explored through the PDSA (plan-do-study-act) cycle process, via the *Backward Design/Teaching for Understanding* approach to curriculum

planning, assessment, and instruction. Focus will be directed to criteria selection in matters of understanding; design standards for quality control; and misconceptions and misunderstandings toward classroom assessment data. McTighe's and Wiggins', *Understanding by Design* approach will provide the framework for the exploration of the six facets of understanding and will serve as a guide through the three stages of the backward design process. Educators will locate, access, retrieve, evaluate, and archive information pertaining to their school's, as well as their individual classroom **assessment scores, state content standards, and performance assessment tasks.**

Course Objectives:

Emphasis will be placed on building skills and confidence in participants' abilities to:

1. explore and analyze DCPS and other available data;
2. utilize "state" (DCPS) and national content standards and benchmarks;
3. understand the PDSA cycle and utilize the Backward Design Process;
4. explore common curriculum, assessment, and instruction practices that (a) promote and (b) may interfere with the cultivation of student understanding;
5. examine a continuum of methods for appropriately assessing the degree of student understanding; and
6. investigate approaches to curriculum and instruction designed to engage student's in inquiry and promote student learning.

Course Goals:

1. To understand the role of data, feedback and assessment in understanding;
2. To understand how to promote thinking, understanding, and academic achievement through the use of assessment tools and curriculum design techniques;
3. To understand how to monitor students' understandings through a variety of means and to adjust instruction accordingly; and
4. To appreciate and capitalize on the opportunities and challenges afforded by alternative forms of assessment

Considerations for the course:

All students will be supplied with some introductory materials, software, and access to other materials on-line. Students will be required to participate in face to face sessions or synchronous chat sessions at set times, and WEEKLY asynchronous discussions. Therefore, students must have an active email account and either access to an Internet connected computer in their home or at school.

Readings:

Readings will be linked from the course website as well as from other sources. These reading assignments will be periodically updated on the course website.

Texts:

Required:

1. McTighe, J. & Wiggins, G.P. (2000). *Understanding by design*. Prentice Hall College Div. ISBN: 013093058X . [Amazon](#) \$23.00 or [ASCD](#) \$20.95. Supplied by AAAS.

Optional:

2. Barell, J. (2003). *Developing more curious minds*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development ASCD. ISBN 0871207192. [Amazon](#) \$25.95.
3. Lissitz, R. W. & Schafer, W.D. (2001). *Assessment in educational reform: Both means and ends*. Pearson Allyn & Bacon; 1st edition. ISBN: 0205332692. [Amazon](#) \$48.00 or \$23.00 used.
4. Torp, L., and Sage, S. (1998). *Problems as possibilities: Problem based learning for K-12 education*. Second edition. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development ASCD. ISBN: 0871202972. [Amazon](#) \$ 7.97.
5. Ronis, D. L. (2000) *Problem based learning for math and science*. Skylight Publishing. ISBN: 1575173050. [Amazon](#) \$32.95.

Methodology:

This course will utilize a combination of face to face and on-line lecture and reading materials, hands-on experiences, discussions, guest speakers, group work and projects to help participants understand effective strategies for utilizing data and data analysis with technology tools to help guide instructional decisions for their classroom.

Student Expectations and Procedures:

1. Students are expected to obtain and actively use a computer account with access to the Internet and WebCT discussion site (the University provides such accounts free to enrolled students.) Students are expected to use **anti-virus software and backup all work**. Since the course will primarily meet on-line it is of importance that you assure that your computer access can easily support the WebCT environment. WebCT Student Manual - <http://www.courses.umd.edu/studentmanual/>
2. Completion of assigned tasks and readings **prior to each class** (the preset catalog time) is required in order to facilitate student learning.
 - o Take the Online Self-Assessment Survey - <http://www.vto.vt.edu/survey.php>
3. It is expected that students will initiate, participate in and facilitate on-line discussions on course topics, issues and readings. Please see the [on-line discussion grading rubric](#).
4. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations please contact me as soon as possible.

5. Students missing the deadline for an assignment must make immediate arrangements with the instructor to fulfill that requirement before the next class session.
6. Please carefully edit all written assignments. A lack of care in proofreading or composition can negatively effect your final grade.
7. The citation style employed should be accurate, acceptable, and recognizable (MLA, Chicago or APA) practice. The [American Psychological Association](#) (APA: <http://www.apa.org>) style of citation is preferred. For quick basics, visit:
 - o Columbia University Press - http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html
8. The University of Maryland has developed a policy describing appropriate academic conduct. Turning in assignments that use substantial portions of the work of others without attribution is considered plagiarizing and is specifically prohibited. Please review information regarding the [Honor Code](#) and other academic integrity policies at: <http://www.jpo.umd.edu/conduct/conduct.html>.

Instructor Responsibilities

Just as we have high expectations for students, we also have high expectations for ourselves. Students should expect that the instructor for this course will:

1. Be prepared for class, read and return students' work in a timely manner, and be interested and engaged in students' work;
2. Remember that each student brings different background knowledge about both content and online experiences to this course, as well as help students develop their personal interests whenever possible;
3. Help students identify sources of additional substantive and methodological expertise, as needed;
4. Meet with students individually or in groups upon request and be available in person, by telephone, and by email to answer questions; and
5. Work hard, have fun and empower students to plan and engage in high quality discussions and experiences.

Email with students is not always a low threshold technology. Students sometimes feel that faculty/instructors should be available to answer questions 24/7 or whenever the student is online. This expectation of an immediate response can occasionally create a negative communication environment. Students' emails can also add significantly to faculty workload. While my past performance has indicated that I return emails promptly (sometimes to students surprise within minutes), in order to eliminate the possibility of problems due to assumptions, the following is the course minimal guideline: All emails will be answered within 24 hours of receipt except on weekends (begins after 4:00 on Friday)-which may take longer. I do however, HIGHLY recommend that you send emails whenever a questions arises, while the above is only a statement of minimal expectations on my part.

Grading Policy and Rubrics:

Grades will be based on the content, clarity of writing and creativity of work in assignments completed for this course. The extent and quality of participation in course discussions (face to face and virtual) will also be evaluated in determining the final grade. The relative portion of the grade assigned to each course component will include:

- a. Participation in face to face/on-line discussions **(15%)**
- b. Mini-assignments and activities (i.e., district/school data analysis, classroom assessments, rubric development etc...) **(20%)**
- c. Final Project. The final project for this course involves the development, testing and analyze of a problem based project with assessment(s) and instructional rubrics for use in your own classroom/school (or other professional context). You will create, discuss, share, revise and produce a "tested" (or analyzed for administrators) final product **(40%)**
- d. Final Reflection Journal/Paper/Project-- reflecting on your own ideas and practices as well as on those introduced in this course **(15%)**
- e. Evaluation, critiquing, and discussion of peer work **(10%)**

All deadlines will be detailed.

The evaluation criteria for this course are described in more detail in the [grading rubric](#).

The grading rubric describes participant performance expectations and efforts most valued. Professionalism, completeness, timeliness and quality are all considered in the evaluation process.