ED 405: Diagnosis and Assessment in Special Education

4 credits

Course description:
Study of the diagnostic process in the assessment of intellectual capacity, educability, behavioral, and emotional characteristics, and academic achievement. Students are required to administer, score, and interpret selected instruments and to compile a diagnostic write-up.

Prerequisite:
ED 400/407. No exceptions will be made to the prerequisites.

Course Format:
This course is part of the core of courses applicable to all undergraduate degree programs in special education. This is a semester-long course; class will be held Tuesdays and Wednesdays for one hour and forty minutes. This course is taught through a combination of lectures, discussions, review of applied examples, guided independent study, and guided in-class activities. Students are required to demonstrate competencies in each of the skill areas through review of available materials, in-class activities, administration of diagnostic assessment, and assessment interpretation.

Goals:
The student will be able to use non-discriminatory formal and informal cognitive and achievement assessment techniques to understand the psycho-educational needs of exceptional learners and to develop appropriate educational recommendations from assessment protocol.

Objectives:
IDEA requires special educators to play a major role in the development of individual education plans for students with special needs. They must be able to develop, implement, and monitor these plans. Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Comprehend basic measurement principles;

2. Discuss some of the more important measures used for the identification and evaluation of children with exceptionalities;
3. apply general evaluative and assessment techniques to children with exceptionalities by:
   a) identifying those instruments available for measuring intervariability differences in children with exceptionalities
   b) administering and interpreting intervariability indices
   c) administering and interpreting intravariability indices;

4. identify types, uses, and/or characteristics of intelligence, achievement, and diagnostic tests;

5. identify types, uses, and/or characteristics of behavioral observation methods (e.g., developmental scales, behavioral rating scales);

6. demonstrate an understanding of characteristics and/or applications of norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, and teacher-made tests;

7. demonstrate an understanding of types and/or applications of other evaluation methods (e.g., trial lessons, checklists, rating scales, error analyses, timed tests);

8. discuss procedural safeguards and/or legal issues related to testing;

9. interpret evaluative data of a student with special needs for screening, diagnostic, and placement purposes;

10. apply evaluative data to determine a student's eligibility for placement in a special education program;

11. analyze issues and/or procedures involved in the development, implementation, and/or evaluation of an Individual Education Program (IEP);

12. analyze ways in which the special education teacher can facilitate the use of evaluative information with students, parents, and teachers.

Topical Outline:
A. Basic Principles of Assessment
   1. Central tendency
   2. Variability
3. Correlation
4. Reliability
5. Validity
6. Item analysis
7. Standardization
8. Score transformations
9. Norm-referenced vs. Criterion-referenced testing
10. Sources for measurement information
11. IDEA and State of Michigan assessment requirements
12. Non-discriminatory testing

B. Assessment Domains
1. Intelligence testing
2. Aptitude batteries
3. Academic achievement
4. Domain-specific assessment
5. Neuropsychological assessment/Perceptual-processing
6. Creative thinking
7. Meta-cognitive strategies
8. Behavioral assessment
9. Learning styles assessment
10. Norm-referenced, Criterion-referenced measurement
11. Teacher-made tests
12. Observation system
13. Self-report inventories
14. Rating scales

C. Standardized Tests
   1. Interpreting results
   2. Modification of testing procedures
   3. Bias in testing

D. Informal Assessment
   1. Work sample and task analysis
   2. Curriculum-based assessment
   3. Interview procedures
   4. Interpreting informal results

E. School Performance Assessment
   1. Group tests of academic achievement
2. Individual tests of academic achievement
3. Analyzing assessment protocols
4. Assessing Unique Educational Needs (AUEN)
5. School readiness
6. Oral language assessment
7. Reading
8. Written language
9. Mathematics
10. Career, Vocational, and Transition assessment
11. Educational recommendations
12. Communicating assessment results

F. Issues in Assessment
   1. Assessing students who are culturally and linguistically diverse
   2. Assessment of infants and toddlers and their families

G. Learning Aptitude
   1. Group tests of intellectual performance
   2. Adaptive behavior assessment

H. Classroom Behavior
   1. Rating scales and checklists
   2. Direct observation
   3. Self concepts and peer acceptance

I. Application of Assessment Results in Special Education
   1. Eligibility
      a. IEPT, MET
   2. Individualized programming
   3. Monitoring
   4. Evaluation
   5. Early childhood
   6. Career and vocational selection
   7. Minimum competency testing


Recommended Text: These will NOT be used in class; however they are excellent professional resources for your library


Additional Expectations:
You are in effect learning a foreign language in this class. Understanding how to administer, interpret, and explain assessments takes time. You need to keep up with the assignments and the readings so we can carry on intelligent conversations and so you can ask questions. I want to see critical thinking expressed in critical questions, comments, reflection, and written assignments. I expect you to write like a professional and we will review, revise, and correct your reports until they are presentable to parents and colleagues.

Disability Services:
If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Disability Services Office at 2001 C.B. Hedgecock (227-1700; TTY 227-1543). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state and University guidelines.