

## **Innovative Testing Tools**

### **Course Outline**

#### **Course Description**

In the age of accountability, assessment is the key element in any restructuring of the educational system and is the primary focus for both individual school achievement and improvement (Chapman and King, 2005). This course will deal directly with the issue of integrating instruction with assessment or what has been popularly referred to as teaching to the test. The paradigm featuring assessment **of** learning will be flipped over to reveal assessment **for** learning.

The focus will be on creating the skills necessary to make classroom exercises and activities so compelling and powerful that the two separate fields of instruction and assessment will merge into a single domain (Bond, 2006). Teachers will begin instructional planning, with the end (assessment) in mind, by identifying the desired results and competency targets as related to their specific subject and grade level. Teachers will address how evidence is gathered through a variety of formal and informal assessments to effectively gauge student performance (Wiggins, McTighe, 1998). Related issues such as classroom management, motivation and test anxiety will be addressed. Alternative methods of assessment will be introduced and incorporated into practical and classroom-friendly activities.

#### **Objectives**

- Assess the course content
- Evaluate traditional assessment
- Describe the elements of alternative assessment
- Evaluate authentic assessment throughout the school day
- Create the outline and criteria for an authentic assessment
- Create an authentic assessment task
- Compare and contrast teaching to the curriculum and . teaching to standardized metrics
- Create an authentic assessment approach, pre-test strategy or post-test strategy
- Compare developmental and summative rubrics
- Compare analytical and holistic rubrics
- Create task-specific and unit rubrics
- Evaluate relevancy of assessment strategies
- Assess the benefits of portfolios
- Evaluate the effectiveness of an instructional unit
- Assess a classroom for stressors
- Evaluate the impact of assessment
- Compare methods of movement and how they can be used in a classroom
- Design activities to incorporate positive self talk
- Design lessons based on standards and benchmarks

- Design a lesson that integrates technology
- Create a comprehensive definition of assessment

### **Curriculum Design & Time Requirements**

This course will outline the parameters of assessment and provide the participants the opportunity to develop assessment tools and rubrics specific to their classrooms or area of expertise. This is a forty-five hour, three credit graduate level course taught in the classroom.

### **Course Materials**

Text: *Assessment as Learning: Using Classroom Assessment to Maximize Student Learning*, by Lorna M. Earl. In this text educators will learn to embrace assessment as an integral part of the learning process in their classrooms-with this comprehensive resource that discusses the changing role of schooling and learning practices, as well as reasons behind the confusion and discomfort surrounding assessment. Case studies, rubrics and lesson plans are included.

### **Session Outline**

#### **Session 1: A Reintroduction to Assessment**

##### **Contents:**

1. Member introductions
2. Individual and group expectations
3. Course sessions, resources and requirements
4. Defining assessment
5. Assessment terminology
6. The purpose of assessment, targets and benchmarks
7. Assignments

#### **Session 2: Standards and Benchmarks**

##### **Contents:**

1. Weighing the pros, cons and perceptions of standards
2. Relating standards to curriculum development: Why students need learning targets
3. Which came first, the curriculum or the test?
4. Benchmarking performance of the class and students through the academic year
5. Getting creative in meeting standards within the curriculum
6. Assignments

#### **Session 3: Standardized Tests**

##### **Contents:**

1. Accountability and school/state testing
2. Using standardized tests as a teaching tool
3. Assisting students to become good test takers
4. Specific strategies to teach test-taking skills (SIMS Model)
5. Parental involvement and test-taking
6. Diminishing the negative perceptions of standardized tests.
7. Assignments

#### **Session 4: Identifying and Understanding Test Anxiety**

##### **Contents:**

1. Students in survival mode
2. The difference between stress and distress
3. Stress and the visual, auditory, motor and memory systems
4. Stressors impacting student performance
5. Assignments

#### **Session 5: Steps Toward Eliminating Test Anxiety**

##### **Contents:**

1. Affirmations as a stress reduction tool
2. Visualization techniques
3. Restructuring brain (neural) patterns
4. Getting rid of A.N.T.s (Automatic Negative Thoughts)
5. Movement-related activities to reduce test anxiety
6. Assignments

#### **Session 6: Comparing Alternative project-based/qualitative) with Traditional Assessment**

##### **Contents:**

1. Evaluating traditional assessment
2. Discovering the elements of alternative assessment
3. Evaluating authentic assessment throughout the school day
4. Creating the outline and criteria for an authentic assessment
5. Creating an authentic assessment task
6. Assignments

#### **Session 7: The Role of Rubrics**

##### **Contents:**

1. Comparing analytical and holistic rubrics
2. Evaluating task specific and unit rubrics
3. Developing criteria for an assessment worksheet
4. Rubrics as holistic and analytical assessment tools
5. Using standards to create rubrics
6. Assignments

#### **Session 8: Utilizing Portfolios**

##### **Contents:**

1. The benefits of portfolios
2. Development of portable life skills: Critical thinking, Organization and Self-Direction
3. Creating timelines and checkpoints for portfolio development/growth
4. Effective self-assessment for students and teachers
5. Quantifying/grading portfolios
6. Assignments

#### **Session 9: Organizing Instruction Based on Assessment**

##### **Contents:**

1. Linking pretest results to the course of study
2. Identify ways of pre-testing: Oral, Written, Socratic questioning

3. Building efficiency into instructional time
4. Developing grading guidelines
5. Learning styles and testing options
6. Learning accommodations for individuals and groups
7. Assignments

## **Session 10: Incorporating Technology/Final Exam**

### **Contents:**

1. Using web-based resources
2. The NTeQ approach
3. Electronic portfolios
4. Final exam and project

### **Grading**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Grading Scale</b>
Classroom Participation	30	100 – 93 <b>A</b>
In Class Assignments	20	92 – 85 <b>B</b>
Final Project	20	84 – 77 <b>C</b>
Final Exam	30	
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>	

### **Student Requirements**

1. Attend all class sessions for the requisite number of hours (45) and actively participate in all class activities.
2. A rubric for the final project will be distributed in the first session that will outline the components and elaboration necessary to achieve the corresponding grades.
3. Written reflections for sessions 2-8 during the course are required. Each reflection must conform to any accepted style manual. Written reflections will be due as follows:
  - a. Reflections on sessions two and three and on sessions four and five at the beginning of session six.
  - b. Reflections on sessions six, seven and eight at the beginning of session nine.
4. Students are required to put the assessment strategies and concepts into action and will be required to construct a portfolio during the course that will serve as a toolkit of specific ideas and protocols for their classrooms as a part of their final project which will include a final exam and will be due by the end of Session 10.

### **Student Academic Integrity**

Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and is subject to academic disciplinary action.