

SPE 791 CRITICAL ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Wednesday 10:40 am – 1:30 pm
Interdisciplinary B 353

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The doctoral seminar is designed to prepare students to do theoretically grounded critiques of scientific scholarship. The seminar is also designed to expose students to contemporary critical issues in special and inclusive education. For this purpose, we will focus this semester on *assessment issues*, given the critical role that assessment plays in every facet of educators' work and students' educational experiences.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The seminar content will be addressed every other week and the other two weeks of each month will be set up with a research group format. For the seminar sessions, we will do critical readings and discussions of assessment issues from two vantage points. First, we will cover foundational information about assessment as well as traditional perspectives on the topic. These materials will be contrasted with assessment literature that relies on a sociocultural perspective. The seminar discussions of the topics will be guided by the following overarching questions:

- **Theoretical lenses:** *How is assessment defined in this literature and how is it related to sociocultural constructs?*
- **Implications for practice:** *In what ways are the theoretical assumptions about assessment related to current practices?
In what ways do current practices reflect the way that assessment is supposed to be done?*
- **Nature of the empirical support:** *What conclusions can you draw about the methodological features of the evidence used to support the main premises and key ideas in this literature?*
- **Implications for the professional roles of teachers and other school leaders:** *Given our analyses, what are the implications for redefining the role and practice of assessment in classrooms?*
- **Implications for policy:** *What does our new understanding of assessment suggest for policy redesign?*

SCHEDULED TOPICS, READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

Readings will be uploaded on the course Blackboard site under readings by week.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
January 19	Introductions	
January 26	Research Group	
February 2	Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt (2010). Chapter 1, <i>The context of assessment.</i> Sociocultural readings.	
February 9	Research Group	
February 16	Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt (2010). Chapter 5, <i>Using test adaptations and accommodations.</i> Sociocultural readings.	
February 23	Research Group	
March 2	Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt (2010). Chapter 9, <i>How to evaluate a test.</i> Sociocultural readings.	
March 9	Research Group	
March 16	Spring break	
March 23	Research Group	
March 30	Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt (2010). Chapter 10, <i>Assessment of academic achievement.</i> Sociocultural readings.	First draft of final products due.
April 6	Research Group	
April 13	Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt (2010). Chapter 14, <i>Using measures of intelligence.</i> Sociocultural readings.	
April 20	Research Group	
April 27	Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt (2010). Chapter 16, using measures of social and emotional	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
	behaviors.	
	Sociocultural readings.	

ASSIGNMENTS

CLASS PARTICIPATION

In order for this seminar to be a successful learning experience, we need to be intentional about the culture and practices that we create together. We need to engage, participate, contribute and nurture the opportunity to risk, critique, and create. Accordingly, let us commit to punctuality and consistent attendance at all sessions. Let us agree to prepare, read extensively to create background knowledge, and enter into classroom discourse to uncover and reveal our assumptions and extend our understanding. We also need to participate in the development of interactive exchanges in which feedback, risk, critique and creation are all part of a cycle of continuous exploration and learning. Students are responsible for reading and studying the assigned readings prior to each class. Students are expected to demonstrate their comprehension of readings through their active participation in class discussions. Absence negatively affects the colleagues with whom you interact, work, and learn. If something occurs that necessitates missing a class, the student is responsible to inform the instructors prior to class.

SHORT CRITICAL ESSAYS

The class will be divided in groups A and B. For the February 2nd seminar session, each group A member will write a 5-page double spaced essay discussing the week's assigned readings. The essays should be posted on blackboard one week prior to the next seminar session—i.e., on January 26th, 2011. The essay should be based on the assigned readings and cover the following aspects:

- ❖ *Synthesis*: Identify agreements, conclusions, or generalizations that can be derived from the readings. Conclusions can refer to (theoretical and/or methodological) insights gained through course readings and/or classroom discussions.
- ❖ *Knowledge building*: Link key points from several readings that offer insights about assessment represented in the traditional literature.

In turn, each group B member will write a critical essay responding to the essays written by group A members. These essays should raise questions or include analytic comments related to the conceptualization of assessment. Disagreements, contradictions, ambiguities, or tensions in the reviewed literature can be raised about the notion of assessment, with a particular emphasis on the role of culture in human performance. Essays from group B members will be posted the day before the next seminar session—i.e., February 1st, 2011.

For the following seminar session, group A and B members will switch the focus of their essays and will continue to alternate for the rest of the semester.

FINAL PRODUCT

Different products will be required from the various student cohorts represented in the seminar. **First-year students** will submit a *revised 25-page* paper on the critical issue they addressed in the fall seminar. The feedback from the seminar instructors should be used in preparing the revised manuscript and students must explain briefly in the introduction of the paper how the feedback was used to rewrite the current version.

Second year students will write a 30-page literature review on the topic of their dissertation. If a literature review was prepared last semester, the students will write a revised version based on the feedback received. A note should be added to the paper explaining how the feedback was used to rewrite the current version. The guidelines for literature reviews discussed in previous seminars will be used for this paper. We will review briefly these guidelines in class.

Students advanced to candidacy will produce an 8-10 theoretically grounded data analysis report based on their dissertation data. Specific guidelines will be provided during individual meetings with instructors.

A first draft of the final product is due on March 30th, 2011. The final products are due on May 5th, 2011. All papers should be prepared according to the 2010 APA publication manual (6th edition).

EVALUATION & GRADES

Feedback will be provided throughout the semester. Final Grades will be Pass/Fail.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you need accommodations due to a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with the faculty, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with one of us as soon as possible. Those requesting accommodations/modifications should also be registered with the Disabled Student Resources department here at Arizona State University.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately. "Plagiarism" means using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Plagiarism and cheating on assignments may result in failing this class, suspension, or expulsion. "All forms of student academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism" are prohibited conduct as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and will be taken very seriously. Please review carefully these rules, procedures, and sanctions at the following web pages:

Student Conduct Code: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/sta/sta104-01.html>

Academic Integrity: http://coe.asu.edu/oss/integrity_conduct_standards.html