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IST666: Educational Assessment and Evaluation
Fall 2014 Syllabus

CONTACT INFORMATION
Instructor: Joette Stefl-Mabry, PhD
Office Draper 104
Email: jstefl@albany.edu
Cell phone: 845 337 9008
Office Hours: Arranged by Telephone
Instructor: Paul Zachos, PhD
Email:
Phone:

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Dates
August 25th – December 9th

Location
Online

Required Textbook:


Course Description

IST666: Educational Assessment & Evaluation (EA&E) is an online competency based, collaborative professional development course for educators that will enable participants to develop and directly apply essential capabilities related to educational assessment and evaluation in their educational settings. The development of this course was made possible by funding provided from the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) [http://www.imls.gov/](http://www.imls.gov/). The University at Albany, State University of New York's College of Computing and Information's Department of Information Studies in collaboration with leaders from the Association for the Cooperative Advancement of Science and Education (ACASE - [http://www.acase.org/](http://www.acase.org/)) developed the instructional materials for this course. The University at Albany's School of Education was part of the partnership in the early stages of the course's development and helped to identify key resources related to classroom and formative assessment.

Learning Module
Participants, working in teams consisting of school librarians and teachers will

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1 This syllabus is a dynamic document, it will change over the course of the semester, and updates will be posted on Blackboard. Be sure to check the Blackboard site regularly.
identify a learning module that is aligned to the existing curriculum in their K-12 (or other educational) setting. By learning module we mean an integrated educational unit, which includes: student learning objectives, instruction, assessment and evaluation. The learning module must be implemented in a K-12 (educational) setting during the period of participation in the course. Participants will work collaboratively on planning, implementing, evaluating, and refining the learning module that will involve periodic assessment of student attainment. Course participants will participate as reviewers for other course participants. Peers and course instructors will review the learning module in all of its stages.

The course is directed exclusively to develop essential assessment and evaluation capabilities. Participants’ attainment of the capabilities will be assessed on the basis of:

- Responses to practical exercises related to assessment and evaluation
- Development and refinement of the learning module
- Participation in peer review of learning modules

Collegial conversations with faculty and peers

Periodic ‘real-time’ meetings will provide opportunities to meet colleagues, pose questions and problems, and share experiences in the atmosphere of a collegial workshop. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive documentation of their level of attainment on each of the essential capabilities, and an evaluation of the final state of their learning module based on instructor and peer review.

Academic Honesty

Due to the exploratory nature of this course, students are encouraged to form groups and to talk about and read each other's assignments - in effect to "share knowledge." Learn by interacting with one another - collaborate, support, and help each another. Nonetheless, students are expected to give credit where credit is due, citing the work and ideas of others in papers they write. As a policy for this course, plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade for the course. In addition, the instructor will pursue further disciplinary action at the university level.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, self-plagiarism or cheating (see http://library.albany.edu/usered/plagiarism/) will result in a zero for the assignment in which the plagiarism occurred, a zero for the course and a referral to the Dean of Graduate Studies. After two referrals to the Dean’s office for plagiarism students are automatically referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Please read the "Standards of Academic Integrity" in the Undergraduate Bulletin 1999-2000 at: http://www.albany.edu/tree-tops/docs/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html. The standards described in this document will be upheld in this course.

“It is every student’s responsibility to become familiar with the standards of academic integrity at the University. Claims of ignorance, of unintentional error, or of academic or personal pressures are not sufficient reasons for violations of academic integrity” (see: http://www.albany.edu/eas/104/penalty.htm).
Disabilities Accommodation
Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring accommodation please contact the Disability Resource Center (see: http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml) and request an accommodation letter. The Disability Resource Center is located in the Campus Center 137, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222. Their phone number is 518 442-5490. It is the students’ responsibility to notify professors about their disabilities (see: http://www.albany.edu/disability/current.shtml).

COMMUNICATION

Becoming a Participant in this Learning Community
Your participation is the learning experience. This is not a passive experience. You are being invited to design, shape, and pursue learning experiences to meet your needs and is of benefit to your classmates as well as to your instructors.
To that end, there are some things that would quickly erode our learning community and so must be avoided. These will be sufficient reason for you to fail the course immediately.

- Missing more than 1 of the monthly mandatory live chat sessions without **prior** permission from the instructor
- Abusiveness toward instructors, classmates, or our learning partners. You are expected to conduct yourself in a courteous, supportive manner.

Email
Each student is expected to have an Albany e-mail account for this class. Please contact the instructors if you do not have an account or if you have questions about how to get one. Students will need to check e-mail on a daily basis during the workweek (Monday-Friday). This is also the best method of communication with the instructors concerning assignments, questions, readings and office hours. Each student should also subscribe to IST-L, the Department of Information Studies' listserv.

Sending Email
The instructors will be available on a limited basis during the weekend.

If you have an emergency and/or need to contact an instructor during the weekend please use Dr. Stefl-Mabry's regular email: jstefl@albany.edu and put the word “Emergency” and your last name in the subject header.

When sending regular (non-emergency) email, please include IST666 and your first & last name in the subject header (ex: IST666 Mary Smith).

Blackboard
On the first day of class please review the features of Blackboard. If you are new to Blackboard, there is a link on the left hand side of the page “Get Help” that will provide you with Blackboard assistance, online tutorials and a link to contact ITS services. Use the following link http://help.blackboard.com for additional assistance.
Reliable Internet access is required to access the course’s Blackboard site. If you experience problems using Blackboard, please read the frequently asked questions (FAQs):
https://wiki.albany.edu/dosearchsite.action?key=askit&searchQuery.queryString=Blackboard+FAQ&spaceKey=askit

**Blackboard Mobile**  
Blackboard mobile is now free, see:
https://wiki.albany.edu/display/public/askit/Blackboard+Mobile+Learn

**Learning Objectives for Educational Assessment and Evaluation**

EA&E is designed so that participants are supported to attain [10 learning objectives]. These objectives target essential capabilities, which are fundamental to competence in educational assessment and evaluation. Progress in attaining these learning objectives will be carefully monitored and documented by the course instructors. EA&E Online is a competency-based course, geared entirely towards the development of targeted capabilities and the demonstration of the attainment of those capabilities.

**The 10 Learning Objectives**

1. Distinguishes the respective roles of curriculum, assessment & instruction  
2. Grasps specificity in working with intended learning outcomes [moves comfortably back and forth from broad learning goals to learning objectives]  
3. Distinguishes educational assessment from testing and grading  
4. Distinguishes educational assessment from educational evaluation  
5. Designs unambiguous scales and rubrics for assessment  
6. Brings concern for the notion of validity to challenges and problems in assessment and evaluation  
7. Brings concern for the notion of reliability to challenges and problems in assessment and evaluation  
8. Evaluation I – Applies assessment information to improve teaching and learning  
9. Evaluation II – Applies assessment information to build community  
10. Brings concern for the notion of Core Capabilities to planning, assessment and evaluation

**Levels of Attainment for the Learning Objectives**

5. Develops the capability in others  
4. Spontaneously applies the capability  
3. Consistently applies the capability  
2. Competently applies the capability  
1. Applies the capability  
0. No evidence of attainment of the capability
The Instructional Environment and Grading

It is our intention to foster an instructional environment in which participants are encouraged to bring to bear their experiences, insights, skills and creativity. A level of comfort in collaboration is sought where all participants feel safe to be themselves and think and express their beliefs. Instructors and students alike are expected to be proactive in creating and maintaining such an environment.

Two common obstacles to such comfort are grading policies based on competition and grading systems which rate ‘on a curve’. Compounding these obstacles is the fact that individuals come into courses with different levels of preparedness for the learning objectives. We have a special way of addressing these issues in EA&E Online. When a course requires that grades be given we will not base those grades on participants’ levels of attainment on the learning objectives. Rather we will apply a system we have devised that we call Accomplishment Based Grading.

Accomplished Based Grading

Grades in this EA&E Online will be based entirely on the completion of what we call ‘accomplishments’. The primary course accomplishment will be the supervised and collaborative building, testing and refinement of a Learning Module in the participant’s area of teaching interest. The criteria for evaluating this required accomplishment are specified in the Indicators of Quality for Learning Modules.

The following rating scheme will be used for all assignments for the course, including all discussion threads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Levels of Attainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Level of Attainment (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completeness</td>
<td>Assignment not submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Level of Attainment (1)</td>
<td>Assignment submitted late</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requirements and Expectations

Prerequisites: Participants can consider themselves sufficiently prepared to do the work of the course if they are enrolled in a teacher preparation program or are actively teaching in an educational or library setting.

- Collaboration: Course participants are required to work as members of a collaborative team that includes at least one teacher (or educator) and one school librarian working on the same learning module. Participants can enroll
as a team or organize a team under the supervision of course instructors within the first two weeks of the course.

- **Accomplishments:** Teams must complete development, testing and refinement of a Learning Module during their period of enrollment in EA&E Online. Realization includes preparing a publishable version of the module as a final product. The final product must include an evaluation of the module’s components based on periodic assessment of student attainment of learning goals central to the module. The evaluations will be supported by peer reviews under the supervision of Instructors.

**Rationale**

- Teaching is an art.
- Educational Assessment is a science.
- Building and Evaluating Educational Programs are moral endeavors.

In this course we will become a community of educational artists and scientists, helping each other to design and refine what we wish to bring to our students. Unlike some courses in which students are responsible simply for mastering set content, this course is designed to challenge you to extend and enhance your understanding of educational assessment and evaluation through active engagement in a collaborative performance-based learning experience (Bluemle, Makula, & Rogal, 2013). You will learn about assessment and evaluation not merely by reading about them, but by actually “doing” them (designing, implementing, analyzing and evaluating) assessment practices in real educational settings.

Assessment literacy is of value for all educational stakeholders. Teachers and school librarians can and should use assessment information to help their students attain learning objectives, and determine the effectiveness of instruction. At the same time, knowing how to develop and refine meaningful assessments enables teachers and school librarians to demonstrate/document evidence of student growth (Popham, 2013).

The course will be challenging and demanding, and will require time, patience and intellectual rigor. As you work with your instructional partners you will be learning how to communicate, share ideas, and collaborate. Collaboration is hard work, and has also been referred to as that “awful “C” word” (Atkinson, 1999). We will ask that you acknowledge and sometimes challenge your mental models and understand the importance of working in groups (Scales, Matthews, & Johnson, 2005). We believe, as Bruffee (1999) states, in the importance of knowledge that is socially constructed through conversation within communities of peers.

We view this course as an intellectual journey, complete with trials, tribulations and triumphs — and yes, even failures. We will encourage you to be reflective and candid about your teaching and learning experiences as the process – the Learning Module-
- unfolds. That means each of us is responsible for providing honest feedback about what we can do collectively and collaboratively to enrich the teaching and learning experience. There may be times that you will feel frustrated and confused, but please know that this “mess” (Salmon, 2007) or “swamp of important problems” (Schön, 1987, p. 3) is part of the learning process. This “swamp: as he calls it is the place where most group workers and group work students choose to be despite the fact that it means dealing with the most difficult and messy of life’s problems, when the only certainty in the beginning is that the result will be hard to predict (Salmon, 2007, p. 79).

Readings and Resources

We will focus on the attainment of core capabilities, those that contribute to concurrent and subsequent learning and/or have powerful application beyond the learning environment. Course assignments and readings have been carefully selected to help you attain the intended student learning outcomes. We will be evaluating the usefulness and quality of course readings and resources. You are expected to play an active role in that evaluation process and will be given the tools to do so.

Research Notice

As part of an on-going effort to improve the design and implementation of this course, you will be asked to keep journals and to submit them on a weekly basis. These will address questions related to the design and/or content of the course (i.e., readings) and will be directed strictly to evaluating the course. You’ll also be asked to participate in discussions on similar topics. Your responses to these inquiries will not have a negative impact on your final grade. Your responses will be used to improve the design of the course, and may be used as the basis of future journal articles and other publications. Neither your name nor any other identifiable information about you will be included in any such publications. Only the instructors of EA&E will have access to your responses. You may choose at any time to have your responses excluded. Such a request will not have a negative impact on your grade.

Course Calendar and Outline of Units

This calendar is subject to revision at the Instructors’ discretion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 01 — Building Community</td>
<td>Week 1: August 25- Sept. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 02 — Procedures, Expectations &amp; Requirements</td>
<td>Week 2: Sept. 8- Sept.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 03 — Essentials of Educational Programs</td>
<td>Week 3: Sept. 15- Sept. 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 04 — Practical Foundations</td>
<td>Week 4: Sept. 22- Sept.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 05 — Educational Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>Week 5: Sept. 29-Oct. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 06 — Validity</td>
<td>Week 6: Oct. 6 – Oct. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 07 — Reliability</td>
<td>Week 7: Oct. 13 – Oct. 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 08 — Evaluating Curriculum</td>
<td>Week 8: Oct. 20 – Oct. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 09 — Evaluating Assessment</td>
<td>Week 9: Oct. 27 – Nov. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10 — Evaluating Instruction</td>
<td>Week 10: Nov. 3 – Nov. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 11 — Evaluating Evaluation</td>
<td>Week 11: Nov. 10 – Nov. 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSIGNMENTS

Contributing to Discussion Board
Over the course of the semester we will be using Discussion Boards, or threaded discussions, on weekly basis for the following purposes:

- To provide the ability for asynchronous discussion to occur over a period of time.
- To demonstrate understanding of key terms and concepts
- To allow members of the learning community to learn from one another and share ideas
- To promote community by creating a community of active learning and questioning
- To encourage reflection to share a synthesis of learning experiences, or to describe how a situation or experience has personal meaning or value to you as an educator, student and/or learner
- To work together to understand a process or to reach consensus on a topic
- To encourage critical inquiry

Weekly Evaluations
You will be asked to post to the Discussion Board re: Ongoing Course Evaluation discussion threads each week. This is important, as it is a way for us to use this information to shape and improve the learning experience for all of us as we are learning. We encourage you to be candid and constructive with your postings. Your comments will not have a negative impact on your grade.

In an effort to continuously work to improve the course, please answer the following questions and post them to the Discussion Board each week after you have completed the assignments for the Unit. You will create threads to address the following topics as you complete each course unit:

1. How much time do you need to adequately complete this Unit (including time spent to complete this evaluation).
2. How much time do you believe you actually spent on the Unit?
3. What was of most value in this Unit?
4. What was of least value in this Unit?
5. How could the Unit or the course in general be improved?
6. Times of discomfort, problems and challenges, may be signs of progress as well as needs. Please share any such experiences that you have as you apply the course concepts and tasks to your work.
Journals

The journal is a place where communication between the professors and the participant can be done in private. Only the professors can read each participant’s comments. The tool should be used to communicate directly with your professors about your progress each week. While there is no set length to your journal entry, we do encourage you to reflect upon your work both in terms of coursework and also in terms of your work in the field – your practice (see Stefl-Mabry, DeQuoy, & Stevens, 2011). What are you observing in the field? Please feel free to reflect upon the readings in your journal entries, for example how does theory actually play out in practice?

Readings for the Course

Over the course of the semester there will be assigned readings related to specific units. They will be posted (typically with links) in the corresponding units on Blackboard.

Suggested Educational Assessment & Evaluation Bibliography


McMillan (Ed.), Research on Classroom Assessment (pp. 275-292). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.


Marzano, R. J. (2012). An easier way to score tests. [Article]. Educational Leadership, 69(6), 82-83.


Mertler, C. A. Classroom assessment literacy inventory.


Palinckhak, R. S. (1975). Behavioral Objectives: To Be or Not to Be? Improving College and University Teaching, 23(3), 155-156.


Works Cited


