The ConnectingLink

**Assessment & Grading:
Promoting Student Growth
Site-based Syllabus**

Course Description
This course is designed to enhance a participant's knowledge of assessment and grading practices. The following themes will be investigated: formative assessment, summative assessment, learning targets and outcomes, methods of assessing, types of assessment protocols, grading practices, providing feedback, and defining mastery. This course prepares (K-16) teachers by providing them with the essential elements needed to translate *assessment of learning* to *assessment for learning*.

Course Prerequisites
Educators enrolled in the course are required to hold a baccalaureate degree.
No prerequisites for this course are required.

Text Books/Supplemental Reading
Selected research articles, research summaries, Web resources, and topical articles drawn from educational literature are integrated into the course. No textbook is required for this course.

Global Goals of the Course
To deepen and/or apply the content and skills of the teacher's existing professional knowledge base by meeting the following global goals of this course:

1. To understand the educational implications of assessment methods and grading practices (NBPTS 1,2,4) (InTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)
2. To examine and evaluate reasons for utilizing formative and summative assessment methods (NBPTS 1,2,3,4,5) (InTASC 6,7,9)
3. To identify clear learning targets, measurable outcomes, and mastery of learning (NBPTS 1,2,3,4,5) (InTASC 1,2,4,5,6,7,8)
4. To understand how grading practices enhance or impede the learning process (NBPTS 1,2,3,4,5) (InTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)
5. To evaluate assessment of learning and assessment for learning (NBPTS 1,2,3,4,5) (InTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)

6. To review the nature and meaning of grades, how to communicate about student learning, and their impact on the learning process (NBPTS 1,2,3,4,5) (InTASC 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)

Instructional Objectives

By the conclusion of the course, each participant should be able to do the following:

1. Examine the keys to quality classroom assessment.
    1.1   Review assessment strategies to promote student learning.
    1.2   Understand "what" to assess.
    1.3   Identify the five types of learning targets: knowledge, reasoning, skills, products, and dispositions.
2. Explore methods and pedagogy of assessment *for* and *of* learning.
    2.1   Decide when to use various assessment methods including selected response, extended written response, performance assessment, and communication.
    2.2   Review the history of grading and intended purposes of grades.
    2.3   Analyze forms of standardized testing and associated terminology.
3. Understand the purpose of grades and the need to communicate student learning.
    3.1   Investigate forms of feedback to communicate learning.
    3.2   Examine various grading scales and factors that distort them.
    3.3   Review collection of evidence to document the learning process.
4. Investigate the nature of grades and principles of successful assessment.
    4.1   Analyze the conditions for re-doing working and accepting late work.
    4.2   Examine levels of consistency when grading including extra credit, weighting of grades, homework, and factoring in "zeros".
    4.3   Review non-academic factors including attendance, behavior, and effort.
5. Devise a classroom assessment plan to maximize student learning.
    5.1   Examine motivation factors that impact learning.
    5.2   Reflect and refine your own personal grading philosophy.
    5.3   Determine a clear method for communicating learning.

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Teaching methodologies of this course are designed to support intensive, graduate-level course work in an interactive setting. Instructional plans support the content of this course, which focuses on the improvement of professional teaching expertise in any or all of the following categories: assessment, collaboration, communication, diverse learners, educational reform, instructional strategies, planning instruction, productivity, reflection of practice, student learning, subject matter, and/or technology.

- Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.

- The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback. Course content, activities, and assessments are organized into 10 modules totaling 45 seat hours. Assessments are due two-weeks following the end of the course.

- Research-based content, presentations, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, references, and assessments are supported by content designed specifically for educators.

- Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class and small group discussions and activities, assigned readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for educators and other school-related personnel to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

Learning Assessment

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the course via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, instructor feedback, small-group sharing and activities requiring participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment. Copies of the course performance assessment rubrics are included in Appendices A-C.

Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards) which cover five aspects of professional educational practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community.

Compliance with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. All teachers should meet the following standards: (1) learner development, (2) learning differences, (3) learning environments, (4) content knowledge, (5) application of content, (6) assessment, (7) planning for instruction, (8) instructional strategies, (9) professional learning and ethical practices, and (10) leadership and collaboration.

Topics Agenda

Day One:
Keys to Quality Classroom Assessment
This lesson will provide an overview of factors of quality assessment. Participants will learn and understand the difference between *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning.*

Assess What? Assess How?
This lesson will explore the concept of "intentional" teaching. The five types of learning targets: knowledge, reasoning, skills, products, and dispositions will be investigated. Participants will be introduced to assessment methods and the importance of aligning targets and methods when planning instruction.

Day Two:
Assessment Methods & Standardized Testing
In this lesson, ways to assess using the following methods: selected response, extended written response, performance assessment, and personal communication will be examined. Types of standardized tests, characteristics of tests, interpretation of scores and testing terminology will be analyzed.

Types of Assessment
In this lesson, the following types of assessment will be surveyed: portfolios, rubrics, and self-assessments. Conferences with students about their learning will be discussed as a way to provide feedback, demonstrate growth, and set learning goals.

Day Three:
Communicating About Student Learning
In this lesson, the importance of feedback as part of formative assessment will be investigated. The role of the student and the teacher in the feedback process will be addressed. The history of grades will be reviewed in context to communicating student learning and grading practices.

Day Four:

Defining Mastery of Learning

In this lesson, the principles of successful assessment will be introduced and the concept of "mastery" will be defined. Types of assessment accessible for instructional decision-making will be revealed.

The Relative Nature of Grades

In this lesson, the nature of grades and their definitions will be explored. The levels of consistency for grading will be investigated. Grading homework, participation, extra credit, weighing grades, and accepting late work are themes that will be studied. Non-academic factors such as effort, attendance, and behavior will be reviewed in context to calculating grades.

Day Five:

Grading Issues

In this lesson, grading measures and scales will be interpreted. A responsive report card format will be discussed and an emphasis on standard-based grading will be introduced.

Final Projects

Assignments/ assessments should reflect that each participant is accountable for a high degree of learning appropriate for graduate level credit. Therefore, instructors will assign 3 formative assignments which can be completed throughout the course. These assignments will correlate to the instructional learning objectives. All courses will also include a final summative project which requires critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation or application. Assessment of the assignments should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due within two weeks of the end of class. Projects submitted during the third week "grace period" will have their grade reduced one full letter grade. No papers will be accepted past the grace period, and participants will, consequently, forfeit credit for the course. Papers are expected to be properly formatted and submitted to the instructor either in person or via mail or an email attachment.

Participants taking professional development unit (not-for-credit) courses must attend all scheduled class sessions and complete all formative assignments. However, they will be exempt from completing the final summative project unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing course reflection via the student portal and all hours are met.

Project One:	Corresponding Objective(s)
Explore 4 Methods of Assessing: This project will explore the 4 methods used to assess student learning. Each participant will select one of the 4 assessment methods to analyze more in depth.	1.0, 1.2, 1.3, 2.0, 2.1
Project Two	**Corresponding Objective(s)**
Assessment Analysis: Participants will serve as a resident expert and share an informal or formal assessment used in their educational environment. The assessment can be a formal, informal, or standardized assessment.	1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.0, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3
Project Three:	**Corresponding Objective(s)**
Year Long Assessment Plan: Taking the knowledge gained from this course, the candidate will create a semester -long plan for classroom assessment. This project will afford participants an opportunity to apply their newly acquired knowledge regarding assessment procedures and tools for the purpose of making informed instructional decisions.	1.0, 1.1, 2.0, 2.1, 2.3, 3.0, 3.1, 3.3, 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
Final Project	**Corresponding Objective(s)**
Assessment & Grading Philosophy Statement: This project is designed to encourage participants to reflect on their current assessment and grading practices. Participants should take their new learning and understanding of assessment and grading into consideration and develop a refined personal statement of their grading philosophy.	1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.0, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.0, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

Distinguished: The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one's own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements;* is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual's personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Distinguished" on the course rubric.

Proficient: The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Proficient" on the course rubric.

Basic: This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Basic" on the course rubric.

Unsatisfactory: The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	40%

Letter grades are based on 100 points possible and assigned based on the university grading scale.

Academic Honesty and Integrity
All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance
In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, are encouraged to inform the Director of Academic Affairs prior to the first class session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Attendance

Participants are required to attend all classes as well as participate in class discussions, small group activities, and projects. Absence from any part of the class will require that you withdraw from the class. You will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 in the event this occurs.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with in-class assignments and evening at-home assignments. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. All work is due not later than two weeks after the class ends. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

University Compliance

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such polices include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.

Course References

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Internet Resources

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**Appendix A:
Participation Rubric**

Criteria	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Attendance	Attended all sessions; was on time for all class meetings.	Attended all class sessions; one excused tardy.	Attended all class sessions; tardy or left early on more than one occasion.	Unexcused absence from the course documented.
Participation in in-class discussions	Consistently demonstrated full, focused, positive, and purposeful participation in all class activities. Frequently expanded upon course content by willingly sharing personal experiences, insights, resources, and skills with other members of the class.	Participated fully in all class activities.	Level of participation in class activities varied. Withdrawn attention and/or active participation in some class activities.	Little participation evident on a daily basis.
Collaboration with others	Demonstrated an open attitude of inquiry and a willingness to consider new ideas, skills, and knowledge.	Participated in small-group activities.	Participation in small-group activities was reserved, negative, unenthusiastic, and/or interfered with contributions of others.	Little participation evident on a daily basis.
Feedback Forms	Demonstrated thoughtful reflection on Feedback Forms with the purpose of applying what was learned in class to own professional situation.	Completed a daily entry on the Feedback Form.	Some Feedback responses were missing and/or lacking in reflection.	Majority of responses were missing and/or lacking in reflection.
	100-90% (A)	89-80% (B)	79-70% (C)	69-0% (Failing)

**Appendix B:
Formative Assignment Rubric**

Criteria	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Relationship to course material	Demonstrated synthesis and connection between content and other references or personal experiences.	Used appropriate examples from content; also included other references.	Vague elaboration of details to demonstrate connection to content.	Unable to locate specific details to demonstrate that materials were reviewed.
Quality of response	Provided insightful perspectives that demonstrate deep understanding of content.	Ideas presented are well supported with relevant details and insights.	Complete response; yet lacking depth.	Unable to locate specific details to show an elaboration of insight.
Organization	Displayed logical and organized flow using appropriate writing conventions/standards.	Ideas presented are somewhat organized or writing conventions and standards reflected some errors.	Information presented is not organized or reflected numerous writing errors.	Lacking across more than one area; errors impeded understanding.
Adherence to due date	Assignment was submitted according to posted due date.	Submission was late; instructor was notified.	Submission was late; no contact made with instructor.	Submission was significantly late; e.g. more than one session late.
	100-90% (A)	89-80% (B)	79-70% (C)	69-0% (Failing)

Appendix C:
Summative Assignment Rubric

Criteria	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Relationship to course material	Demonstrated synthesis and connection between course content and other references or personal experiences.	Used appropriate examples from course content; also included other references.	Vague elaboration of details to demonstrate connection to course content.	Unable to locate specific details to demonstrate that course materials were reviewed.
Quality of response	Provided insightful perspectives that demonstrate deep understanding of course content.	Ideas presented are well supported with relevant details and insights.	Complete response; yet lacking depth.	Unable to locate specific details to show an elaboration of insight.
Organization	Displayed logical, organized, and appropriate writing conventions/standards.	Ideas presented are somewhat organized or writing conventions and standards reflect some errors.	Information presented is not organized or reflects numerous writing errors.	Lacking across more than one area; errors impede understanding.
Adherence to due date	Assignment was submitted according to posted due date.	Submission was late; instructor was notified.	Submission was late; no contact made with instructor.	Submission occurred significantly late; e.g. beyond 3 weeks from course completion.
	100-90% (A)	89-80% (B)	79-70% (C)	69-0% (Failing)