SPED6270: Assessing and Evaluating Students with Disabilities

Course Credit: 3.0 NJCTL credits

Dates & Times:
This is a 3-credit, self-paced course, covering 9 modules of content. The exact number of hours that you can expect to spend on each module will vary based upon the module coursework, as well as your study style and preferences. You should plan to spend approximately 15 hours per credit working online, and up to 30 hours per credit working offline.

LMS Link: https://moodle.njctl.org/course/view.php?id=301

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Teachers will learn about different assessments and assessment practices for students with disabilities. Specific topics include the rationale for assessing students with exceptional learning needs, administering and analyzing standardized and functional assessments, psychological and educational assessments, and diagnostic assessments, and how these assessments are involved in evaluation and special education plan development.

Prerequisite: SPED6210, SPED6220, SPED6230, SPED6240, SPED6250, SPED6260

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of the course, the student will:

1. identify and assess students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities.

2. use appropriate standardized, functional, psychological and educational assessments to determine student needs.

3. analyze and incorporate assessment data in evaluation and development of appropriate individualized education plans/programs.

TEXTS, READINGS, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:

Required Text(s):
The open-source textbook below is used throughout this program.
Lombardi, P. (2023). The Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Educator. University System of New Hampshire Pressbooks. Retrieved from https://pressbooks.usnh.edu/edc703-803/

This course also uses presentations and journal articles accessible within each course module. When viewing each module's PowerPoint slideshow, you should review all external links in white boxes *unless* they are denoted as optional. Other links within the slideshow and inserted into the "notes" section are for reference or further information only.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Consistent attendance in your online courses is essential for your success. Failure to verify your attendance within the first 7 days of this course may result in your withdrawal. If for some reason you would like to drop a course, please contact the Dean of Students.

Students should interact with fellow students and course instructor via the discussion boards within the course modules. These discussion boards are monitored by your course instructor, and you can post questions or thoughts on module learning here.

Online classes have assignments and participation requirements just like on-campus classes. Budget your time carefully. If you are having technical problems, problems with your assignments, or other problems that are impeding your progress, let your instructor know as soon as possible.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE:
In order to receive a Passing grade, the participant must complete the following course requirements: all short answer assignments, critical thinking assignments, and the final reflection outlined in the *Assignments* section of the Class Schedule (below).

Grade Distribution:
Proctored Exams	50%
Critical Thinking Assignments	30%
Reflection Paper	10%
Short Answer Assignments	10%

Grade Scale:

A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	86 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 72
D	60.0 – 69.9
F	59.9 or below

GRADING RUBRIC:

The following rubric is used to score:
- Short Answer Assignment – 10% of grade
- Critical Thinking Assignments – 30% of grade

The minimum possible score for this rubric is 4 points, and the score will be converted to the minimum grade available in this module (which is zero unless the scale is used). The maximum score of 25 points will be converted to the maximum grade.

Intermediate scores will be converted respectively and rounded to the nearest available grade. If a scale is used instead of a grade, the score will be converted to the scale elements as if they were consecutive integers.

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Below Expectations	Limited Evidence
		15 points	*12 points*	*9 points*	*6 points*
Requirements	N/A	• Includes all of the required components as specified in the assignments	• Includes most of the required components as specified in the assignments	• Includes some of the required components as specified in the assignments	• Includes few of the required components as specified in the assignments
	14 to 15 points	*13 points*	*10 to 12 points*	*7 to 9 points*	*4 to 6 points*
Content	• Demonstrates strong or excellent knowledge of the materials; correctly includes and represents knowledge from the readings and sources.	• Demonstrates adequate knowledge of the materials; represents some knowledge from the readings and sources.	• Some significant but not major errors or omissions in demonstration of knowledge or expresses your personal experience without reference to the readings and sources.	• Major errors or omissions in demonstration of knowledge.	• Fails to demonstrate knowledge of the materials.
	19 to 20 points	*16-18 points*	*13 to 15 points*	*9-12 points*	*5 to 8 points*
Critical Thinking	• Demonstrates strong or excellent critical thinking and analysis of concepts and applications, integrating module materials, professional practice and real world experiences to support your thinking. This may include a more global conversation about pedagogical implications and is not limited only to their classroom	• Demonstrates good or adequate critical thinking and analysis of concepts and applications, integrating module materials, professional practice and classroom application.	• Some significant but not major errors or omissions in critical thinking and analysis.	• Major errors or omissions in critical thinking and analysis.	• Fails to demonstrate critical thinking and analysis.
		9 to 10 points	*7 to 8 points*	*5 to 6 points*	*3 to 4 points*
Grammar, Style, and Organization	N/A	• Project is clearly organized and well-written. Strong sentence and paragraph structure; few errors in grammar and spelling. Proper APA formatting.	• Project is fairly well organized and written; it is in proper format (including APA). Reasonably good sentence and paragraph structure; significant errors in grammar and spelling.	• Project is poorly organized; does not follow proper paper format (including APA). Inconsistent to inadequate sentence and paragraph development; numerous grammar/spelling errors.	• Project is not organized or well written and is not in proper format (including APA). Poor quality work; unacceptable grammar/spelling.

The following rubric used to score the Final Reflection Critical Thinking assignment (10% of grade):

The minimum possible score for this rubric is 4 points, and the score will be converted to the minimum grade available in this module (which is zero unless the scale is used). The maximum score of 25 points will be converted to the maximum grade.

	Meets Expectation	Approaches Expectation	Below Expectation	Limited Evidence
	7 points	*5 points*	*3 points*	*1 point*
Content	• Demonstrates excellent knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories relevant to the topic.	• Demonstrates fair knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories.	• Demonstrates incomplete or insubstantial knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories.	• Demonstrates little or no knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories.
Depth of Reflection	• Content is well supported and addresses all required components of the assignment.	• Content is partially supported; addresses most of the required components of the assignment.	• Content contains major deficiencies; addresses some of the required components of the assignment.	• Content is not supported and/or includes few of the required components of the assignment.
Evidence and Practice	• Response shows strong evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course. The implications of these insights for the respondent's overall teaching practice are thoroughly detailed, as applicable.	• Writing is mostly clear, concise, and well organized with good sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	• Response is missing some components and/or does not fully meet the requirements indicated in the instructions. Some questions or parts of the assignment are not addressed. Some attachments and additional documents, if required, are missing or unsuitable for the purpose of the assignment.	• Response excludes essential components and/or does not address the requirements indicated in the instructions. Many parts of the assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, and/or not at all.
	4 points	*3 points*	*2 points*	*1 point*
Writing Quality	• Writing is well-organized, clear, concise, and focused; no errors.	• Some minor errors or omissions in writing organization, focus, and clarity.	• Some significant errors or omissions in writing organization, focus, and clarity.	• Numerous errors in writing organization, focus, and/or clarity.

The proctored assessments are not scored using a rubric. These assessments are scored using percentage correct to assign a letter grade.

ACADEMIC STANDING:
NJCTL has established standards for academic good standing within a student's academic program. Students enrolled in any NJCTL online course must receive an 80 or higher to successfully complete a course and receive credit for that course. An 80 is equivalent to a GPA of 2.7 or B-. Additionally, students in an endorsement program must receive a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all courses combined in order to successfully complete the program.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, reusing /repurposing your own work, unauthorized possession of academic materials, and unauthorized collaboration.

CITING SOURCES WITH APA STYLE:
All students are expected to follow proper writing and APA requirements when citing in APA (based on the APA Style Manual, 6th edition) for all assignments. Resources for doing so can be found here.

DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT:
We are committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability requesting academic accommodations should contact the Dean of Students, Melissa Axelsson, for additional information to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities (melissa@njctl.org).

NETIQUETTE:
Respect the diversity of opinions among the instructor and classmates and engage with them in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner. All posts and classroom communication must be conducted in accordance with the student code of conduct. Think before you push the Send button. Did you say just what you meant? How will the person on the other end read the words?

Maintain an environment free of harassment, stalking, threats, abuse, insults or humiliation toward the instructor and classmates. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, religious, age, disability, sexist (or sexual orientation), or racist nature; and the unwanted sexual advances or intimidations by email, or on discussion boards and other postings within or connected to the online classroom.

If you have concerns about something that has been said, please let your instructor know.

READING SCHEDULE:
Required readings are available within each module by clicking the links where materials are listed under the "Required readings:" tab. Many modules in this course offer choice. The list of readings, podcasts, and videos are inclusive. Students have significant choice in their supplementary materials as noted in the module's PowerPoint.

Module	Assignments
1 – Introduction to Assessment	**Short Answer (Q&A):** After reviewing the presentation "Introduction to Assessments," please discuss the key parts of a comprehensive assessment in special education. How do these parts meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)? **Critical Thinking:** This assignment will help you analyze the key concepts related to special education evaluations from the presentation "Introduction to Special Education Evaluations." You will reflect on the importance of these evaluations and their practical applications in real educational settings. Include the following in a 500-700 word PDF submission: Assignment Guidelines: ● Explain why special education evaluations are important in schools. ● Discuss how these evaluations help identify students' needs and shape their educational plans. ● Describe the different parts of a comprehensive assessment in special education. ● Explain what screening and diagnostic assessments are, and how progress monitoring works. ● Discuss why it's important to use various assessment methods to fully understand a student's abilities. ● Explain how special education evaluations relate to the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ● Discuss why valid and reliable assessments matter for determining if a student needs special education services. ● Reflect on the importance of collecting data from different areas of development and involving families in the assessment process. ● Share any experiences you have had with special education evaluations in schools. ● Reflect on how these evaluations help students with disabilities get the support they need.
2 - Assessment and Evaluation of Students with Disabilities	**Short Answer (Q&A):** In this module on "Assessment and Evaluation of Students with Disabilities," we explored various key concepts related to the assessment process. Reflect on what you have learned and respond to the following questions: Importance of Documentation: Why is documentation crucial in the referral process for special education services? Understanding Bias: What are some potential biases that can affect the assessment of students with disabilities? How can educators work to minimize these biases in their evaluations? Assessment Terms: Choose one assessment term discussed in the module (such as raw scores, age equivalent scores, or percentiles) and explain its significance

in understanding a student's performance. How can this term guide instructional planning?

Critical Thinking:
You will engage in specific tasks that require analysis, reflection, and practical application of assessment practices in educational settings from the concepts learned in this module.
Assignment Tasks:
1.   Documentation Review:
   - Task: Select a student you teach or create a hypothetical student profile (including age, grade, and specific challenges) that requires special education evaluation.
   - Outcome: Draft a documentation outline that includes the following:
      - A description of the initial concerns regarding the student.
      - Examples of interventions attempted (Tier 1, 2, and 3).
      - Evidence of the student's progress or lack thereof during these interventions.
      - Notes from discussions with the student's family regarding concerns and observations.
2.   Assessment Term Application:
   - Task: Choose one assessment term from the presentation (e.g., raw scores, age equivalent scores, or percentiles) and research its application in educational assessments.
   - Outcome: Write a brief explanation of this term, including:
      - Its definition and significance.
      - How it is calculated and interpreted.
      - A specific example of how this term could guide instructional planning for your hypothetical student.
2.   Reflection:
   - Task: Reflect on the importance of thorough assessments and evaluations in supporting students with disabilities.
   - Outcome: Write a short paragraph discussing how the tasks you completed have enhanced your understanding of the assessment process and its impact on student outcomes.
Formatting:
   - Your assignment should be approximately 700 words in total.
   - Use APA formatting for any citations and references.

| 3 – Assessments Related to Intelligence | **Short Answer (Q&A):**
Referring to the presentation on assessments related to academic skills and abilities, how can educators effectively utilize assessment data to tailor interventions for diverse learners? What strategies can be implemented to ensure that assessments are accessible and inclusive for all students?

Critical Thinking:

For this assignment, you will create a practical communication guide that will help special education teachers effectively convey intelligence assessment results to students and their families.

Instructions:

1.   Develop the Communication Guide

    • Create a one-page communication guide that includes the following elements/key points to cover:

        • Outline essential information to discuss with families, including:

        • What the assessment measures (e.g., cognitive abilities, academic potential)

        • The meaning of the scores and how they relate to the child's learning needs

        • The limitations of the assessment (e.g., cultural bias, situational factors)

        • Include strategies to ensure families understand the results, such as:

            • Using clear, jargon-free language

            • Providing visual aids (e.g., charts or infographics)

            • Encouraging questions and providing thoughtful, supportive responses

        • Recommend steps for families to take after receiving the assessment results, such as:

            • Scheduling an IEP or other meeting to discuss implications for educational planning |

- Exploring additional resources or support services available

- Encouraging open communication with teachers and support staff

2.   Reflection

- Along with your communication guide, write a brief reflection (250-300 words) on:

  - What you learned about the importance of effective communication regarding assessment results.

  - How this understanding will influence your future interactions with families as a special education teacher.

  - Any challenges you foresee in communicating these results and how you plan to address them.

4 – Assessments Related to Academic Skills and Abilities	**Short Answer (Q&A):** Considering what you have learned in this module, how will your understanding of assessments influence your future practice as a special education teacher? What steps will you take to advocate for your students in the assessment process? **Critical Thinking:** Your response should be 500-700 words in length and submitted in PDF format. Choose two assessments discussed in the module (e.g., Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement). For each assessment: ● Provide a brief overview, including its purpose and age range. ● Describe the specific academic skills measured (e.g., reading, writing, math). ● Explain how the assessment results can inform educational decisions and support services for students. ● Analyze the limitations associated with intelligence and academic assessments: ● Discuss potential cultural bias and its impact on performance. ● Address limitations in what these assessments measure and the risk of relying solely on standardized tests. ● Reflect on how these limitations can affect the identification of learning disabilities and planning appropriate interventions. **Proctored Mid-Term Exam**

5 – Assessments Related to Speech and Language	**Short Answer (Q&A):**
	In your own words, define the difference between speech and language disorders. Why is it important for educators to understand this distinction when assessing students?
	
	Critical Thinking:
	● Your response should be 500-700 words in length and submitted in PDF format.
	
	● Select two of the assessments discussed in the presentation.
	  ● Develop a hypothetical student profile (e.g., age, communication challenges, academic struggles, social-emotional concerns).
	  ● Justify why each selected assessment is appropriate for the student.
	  ● Identify the key components of the assessments you selected.

	- Discuss how the results of these assessments would inform instructional strategies, accommodations, and interventions. - Consider the limitations of the assessments and propose additional methods (observations, checklists, informal assessments) to supplement formal testing. - Explain how the assessment results would contribute to an IEP (e.g., goal-setting, accommodations, communication support). - Discuss collaboration with an SLP and other professionals in the assessment and intervention process. - Reflect on how understanding speech and language assessments will impact your future role as a special education teacher.
6 – Assessments Related to Auditory and Visual Abilities	**Short Answer (Q&A):** Identify one auditory assessment (e.g., the Test of Auditory Perceptual Skills – TAPS-4 or Compass Auditory Discrimination Test) and one visual assessment (e.g., the Test of Visual Perceptual Skills – TVPS-4 or the Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration) discussed in the presentation. Explain how each assessment measures specific skills (such as auditory discrimination, visual-perceptual skills, or visual–motor integration) and why these skills are critical for student success in academic settings when working with students with disabilities. Discuss the limitations of these assessments. How might factors such as test administration time, age ranges, or the dependency on closed-captioned videos and online links affect your interpretation of the results? **Critical Thinking:** - Your response should be 500-700 words in length and submitted in PDF format. - For this assignment, you will critically analyze the assessment tools presented in the module "Assessments Related to Auditory & Visual Abilities" and evaluate their impact on instructional decision-making for students with disabilities. Your analysis should not only describe the assessments but also critically evaluate their strengths, limitations, and potential impact on teaching and learning in inclusive settings. Guidelines: - Choose two assessments: Select one auditory assessment (for example, the Test of Auditory Perceptual Skills – TAPS-4, Compass Auditory Discrimination Test, or the Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test) and one visual assessment (for example, the Test of Visual Perceptual Skills – TVPS-4, Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration, or the Motor-Free Visual Perception Test – MVPT-4) from the presentation.

- Describe the purpose and measurement:
  Briefly describe each chosen assessment with reference to what specific skills or abilities are being measured (e.g., auditory discrimination, visual-motor integration, visual perceptual skills).

- Critically evaluate the assessments:

  - Analyze the reliability and validity of each assessment.

  - Discuss any limitations presented in the assessment process. For example, address issues such as the dependency on technology (e.g., closed-captioned videos, online links), administrative constraints (e.g., time limitations, individualized test administration), and potential cultural or linguistic biases in test design.

- Implications for instruction:

  - Examine how the results from these assessments can inform instructional practices. Provide concrete examples of how you might modify or differentiate instruction based on the data from these assessments.

  - Reflect on potential challenges you may face when interpreting the results.

  - Propose at least one strategy for overcoming challenges or limitations you identified. How might you or your school address these issues to create a more holistic and equitable assessment environment?

- Conclusion:
  Reflect on your findings and articulate the overall value of using these assessments in special education settings.

7 - Assessments Related to Physical and Socio-Emotional Health and Abilities	**Short Answer (Q&A):** Which assessment do you believe has the most significant impact on identifying student needs in special education? Explain your reasoning with examples. **Critical Thinking:** Choose one of the following case studies and address the following prompts. Your response should be 500-700 words in length and submitted in PDF format.

1. A Second-Grade Student with Undiagnosed Hearing Loss
   - A student is struggling with reading, following instructions, and participating in discussions. A school nurse's hearing screening reveals moderate hearing loss.
   - Questions to Consider:
     - How might earlier screening have changed this student's experience?
     - What role do teachers and specialists (e.g., audiologists) play in ensuring students' needs are met?
     - What accommodations or interventions would be appropriate?

2. An Eighth-Grade Student with Suspected Depression and ADHD
   - A student struggles with organization, social interactions, and motivation. Screenings suggest symptoms of both ADHD and depression.
   - Questions to Consider:
     - What are the next steps for assessment and support?
     - How can teachers provide classroom support while further evaluations take place?
     - What challenges arise from comorbid conditions like ADHD and depression?

2. A High School Student with Autism and Social Communication Challenges
   - A student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) struggles with peer relationships and classroom participation. A social skills checklist indicates deficits in social reciprocity.
   - Questions to Consider:
     - What strategies can educators use to support the student's social-emotional development?
     - How can teachers collaborate with specialists like speech therapists and mental health professionals?
     - What challenges might arise in implementing social skills interventions in an inclusive setting?

Using insights from your chosen case study, discuss the following:
1. Ethical Implications of Assessments:
   - How can educators ensure that assessments are used fairly and without bias?
   - What are the potential risks of over-identification or under-identification?
   - How can teachers address concerns from parents about mental health and socio-emotional screenings?
2. Improving Implementation in Schools:
   - What steps can schools take to ensure assessments are used effectively and equitably?

	• How can collaboration between teachers, school psychologists, and related service providers improve student outcomes? • What professional development or training should educators receive to better understand assessments? Reflection: • How has this assignment shaped your understanding of assessments in special education? • Discuss one change you would make to your teaching practice or advocacy efforts based on what you've learned.
8 - Interpreting and Including Assessment Data in Special Education Plans	**Short Answer (Q&A):** Considering the importance of interpreting assessment data in developing effective special education plans, how can educators ensure that they communicate assessment results to students and their families in a supportive manner? Additionally, what strategies can be employed to identify and support twice-exceptional students based on their assessment data? **Critical Thinking:** 1. Select a High Leverage Practice Video: Choose one of the High Leverage Practice videos that highlight instructional strategies used to support students with disabilities. Look for videos that demonstrate adaptations in teaching methods, materials, or classroom environment that enhance student learning. 1. https://highleveragepractices.org/implementation-resources/videos 2. https://highleveragepractices.org/unedited-clips-teachers-implementing-hlps 2. Focus on Instructional Modifications: As you watch the video, pay close attention to the following aspects: 1. Specific modifications made to the teaching approach to meet the needs of diverse learners. 2. How the teacher differentiates instruction based on student abilities and learning styles. 3. The use of visual aids, technology, or other resources that support understanding and engagement. 3. Observation Notes: Take detailed notes during the video on: 1. Key instructional strategies employed by the teacher. 2. The impact of these modifications on student engagement and participation. 3. Any observable changes in student behavior or understanding as a result of the instructional strategies.

4. Reflection and Analysis: After viewing the video, write a reflective response up to 700 words that includes:
   1. A summary of the video and the instructional modifications observed.
   2. An analysis of how these modifications supported student learning and engagement.
   3. Personal insights on how you might implement similar modifications in your future classroom, including specific examples tailored to diverse learners.

Proctored Final Exam