

Certificate Proposal Overview
Department of Educational Psychology
Department of Bicultural and Bilingual Studies

Certificate in Language Acquisition and Bilingual Psychoeducational Assessment

1. Statement of Purpose.

This 15-hour certificate in Language Acquisition and Bilingual Psychoeducational Assessment (LABPA) is designed to meet the needs of prospective students interested in developing skills in bilingual psychoeducational assessment and foundational knowledge in language acquisition and the bilingualism continuum, with an emphasis on Spanish-speaking English Language Learners (ELLs). Briefly, bilingual psychoeducational assessment refers to the utilization and interpretation of tests of language proficiency, cognitive abilities, and academic achievement. Results of these assessments are typically utilized in the educational planning for children experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties; these include children served in the general education setting, as well as those receiving special education and related services. These assessments may also be used for determining a student's eligibility for receiving special education services. The emphasis on bilingual assessment is significant in that professionals trained in bilingual psychological assessment continue to be in shortage, sometimes resulting in unstandardized testing and invalid interpretation of test results (Ochoa, Rivera, & Ford, 1997).

The purpose of the LABPA certificate is to increase the utilization of best practices in bilingual psychoeducational assessment based upon an understanding of language acquisition. Best practices incorporate knowledge of tests of cognitive and achievement abilities, of tests of language proficiency, and bilingualism and language acquisition. The goal is to improve the educational experience, educational planning, provision of special education services, and overall well-being of ELL children, and youth in general.

The LABPA certificate is to be offered through the Department of Educational Psychology (EDP) with support from the Department of Bicultural and Bilingual Studies (BBL). Both departments reside in the College of Education and Human Development. The certificate proposal is part of the EDP Strategic Plan and represents the efforts of the department to work with other departments and to further the institutional UTSA mission in providing extended specialized skill development in psychoeducational assessment and planning to meet a growing school and community need. Certificate programs provide opportunities for postgraduate training to those already having earned a postsecondary degree. Certificate programs are narrower in scope and shorter in duration than master's degrees.

Educational Goals.

The number of students identified as ELLs comprises approximately 20% of the students in American schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Latino youth who speak Spanish as their native language represent approximately 80% of these ELLs (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b). Notably, Latino youth continue to exhibit increased grade retention and elevated levels of school dropout (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b; National Association of School Psychologists, 2003). This demographic and educational attainment data highlight the need for school psychologists and other school personnel to be prepared to provide appropriate and adequate educational services to ELL populations. One such service is psychoeducational assessment of students referred to school psychologists and other assessment providers because of academic and/or behavioral difficulties.

Using a bilingual school psychologist is the most acceptable practice when conducting a bilingual psychoeducational assessment and is considered to be best practice (Bainter & Tollefson, 2003). However, there is a severe shortage of bilingual school psychologists in the United States; they make up only 10.8% of all school psychologists and only 6.2% provide psychological services in a language other than English (Curtis et al., 2008). This issue is further complicated by the fact that few school psychology programs offer training specifically aimed at preparing practitioners to deliver services and provide educational planning recommendations for bilingual students, as a majority of practicing school psychologists report that their training in second language acquisition and in conducting and interpreting bilingual assessment is less than adequate (Ochoa, Rivera, & Ford, 1997). Moreover, conducting bilingual psychoeducational assessments involves the utilization of measures not typically taught in school psychology graduate programs.

The goals of this certificate are to address this problem by meeting the growing need for improved bilingual education and bilingual psychoeducational assessment training amongst psychology practitioners and educational diagnosticians. The certificate coursework provides students with a strong background in multicultural assessment theory, language acquisition principles, principles of bilingual education, exposure to standardized measures for completing bilingual psychoeducational assessments, and skills to apply this learning to relevant contexts (e.g., educational settings, clinic settings).

Link to Existing Programs. The certificate in LABPA will be housed in the EDP program. Students would be required to have attained a bachelor's degree and be admitted into a masters, specialist, or doctoral level school psychology – or other applied psychology (counseling and clinical) – graduate program. These students are expected to have already completed coursework in academic and cognitive assessment. Alternately, students would be required to currently hold a graduate degree in an applied psychology field (school, counseling, or clinical) or to be

educational diagnosticians. The requirement for holding, minimally, a bachelor's or specialist degree, and pertinent coursework, ensures that students have the educational foundation and assessment skills necessary to learn and conduct more advanced assessment techniques utilized in bilingual psychoeducational assessment and subsequent educational planning.

2. **Statement of Need.**

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is the largest professional association of school psychologists in the United States. The NASP also provides review and approval services to graduate programs in school psychology. There are approximately 200 NASP-approved school psychology graduate programs; this includes programs that award degrees at the master's, specialist, and/or doctorate level. Of these, only 19 programs were self-nominated as programs with a focus on multiculturalism and/or bilingualism as part of a NASP multicultural training program survey. Only one school psychology university program in the state of Texas (Texas A&M University, College Station, TX) identified itself as having a focus on multiculturalism and/or bilingualism. This is a doctoral-only program and does not provide training to master's or specialist level school psychologists or to practitioners not enrolled in the doctoral program. These figures demonstrate the dearth of bilingual psychoeducational assessment training experiences available to school psychologists nationwide. The previously reported ELL demographic and achievement statistics demonstrates the need for such training; indeed, NASP recognizes this unmet need and has stated its commitment to the recruitment and training of greater numbers of diverse individuals to serve the needs of all youth (NASP, 2009).

These findings are made more salient when given the overall shortage and job outlook for school psychologists. Curtis, Hunley, and Grier (2004) reported that the overall employment outlook for school psychologists is favorable, with an expected shortage of almost 15,000 school psychologists by 2020 (Curtis, Hunley, & Grier, 2004). While there is no data specific to bilingual school psychologists, the previously reported low numbers of school psychologists providing services in a language other than English suggests an even greater need for this group. Indeed, school districts with serious shortages of bilingual school psychologists and other bilingual assessment personnel often respond by contracting with outside agencies to complete bilingual assessments (Lopez & Rogers, 2007). Moreover, informal interviews with students in our school psychology programs, including those on practicum and internship, as well as with partnering schools, indicate a high desire to work with and hire bilingual school psychologists.

These findings highlight the significant need for bilingual psychoeducational assessment training, especially for practitioners and students in the San Antonio area. Notably, the closest bilingual training opportunity is at Texas A&M University, and that site only serves doctoral-level students. In addition to the limited opportunities for professionals in the San Antonio area, it appears that offering the LABPA certificate

would benefit the student population of San Antonio and neighboring areas, as the demographic population indicates a high need for this training. In addition to addressing the lack of training programs, the certificate requirement to pass a state-mandated Spanish proficiency test (e.g. Texas Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test-Spanish) contributes to the requirements for bilingual certification in the educational setting for Texas. Moreover, obtaining this certificate may increase participants' competitiveness for job opportunities in the field.

To address these needs, the LABPA Certificate is able to meet the needs of multiple populations: (a) graduates of master's, specialist, or doctoral programs in applied psychology fields (school psychology, clinical psychology, and counseling psychology), (b) educational diagnosticians, and (c) students in applied psychology graduate programs that have already completed graduate coursework in cognitive and academic assessment. For these students, the LABPA certificate would allow them to integrate best practices in bilingual psychoeducational assessment and educational planning for ELLs into their practice.

3. **Statement of Resources.** No additional resources are needed for this certificate. Currently, the Educational Psychology department and Bicultural and Bilingual Studies department employ quality faculty to oversee and teach courses as well as provide supervision to students who are interested in attaining the LABPA certificate. Existing courses, classrooms, and technologies will support the program delivery. No new course is being created for this certificate. No course release or buy-outs are integrated into the program or for course development, as it is not standard practice to release faculty for course development or program coordination.

4. **Pre-Requisites for Enrollment**

- a. Bachelors degree with a current status as a student in graduate-level school psychology, counseling psychology, or clinical psychology program with completed coursework in areas of Cognitive Assessment and Academic Assessment
- Or
- b. Current Educational Diagnostic Certification
- Or
- c. Graduate of Master's or Specialist or Doctoral-level program in: school psychology, counseling psychology, or clinical psychology
- And
- d. Attainment of passing grade on a state-mandated Spanish proficiency test (e.g. Texas Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test – Spanish)

Note: Appropriate coursework in areas of Cognitive Assessment and Academic Assessment includes graduate-level coursework that integrates the administration, scoring, and interpretation of commonly used measures (e.g., WISC-IV, WIAT-III, WJ-III Tests of Cognitive Abilities and of Achievement) within these domains. These

courses are typically completed after students have completed coursework on the principles and techniques of evaluation, including principles of psychological and educational measurement, statistical and psychometric concepts, and the development and selection of assessment instruments related to a range of psychological constructs. Completion of appropriate coursework should be documented by course syllabi indicating training in these areas.

Although coursework will be offered in English, students must have the ability to administer Spanish-language tests of language proficiency, academic achievement, and cognitive abilities. The attainment of a passing grade on a state-mandated Spanish proficiency test pertains to this requirement.

5. **Description of Curriculum.**

Requirements for completion include:

- (a) Completion of **15 graduate** hours of approved UTSA coursework with a GPA of 3.0 or above
- (b) Completion of a language acquisition and bilingual psychoeducational assessment project portfolio.

EDP Required Courses:

- EDP 6343 Advanced Psychological Assessment
 - Bilingual Psychoeducational Assessment (Section)
 (3-0) 3 hours credit.
 Theory and application of specific instruments and techniques relevant to bilingual psychoeducational assessment. Instruments and techniques introduced assess language proficiency, intelligence, achievement, and emotional and behavioral functioning. Emphasis is placed on measures and techniques for Spanish-speaking ELLs.
- EDP 6833 Practicum in School Psychology
 - Bilingual Psychoeducational Assessment (Section)
 (3-0) 3 hours credit.
 Application - including administration, scoring, interpretation, and treatment/educational planning - of specific instruments and techniques relevant to bilingual psychoeducational assessment. Instruments and techniques utilized assess language proficiency, intelligence, achievement, and emotional and behavioral functioning. Students will complete one comprehensive bilingual psychoeducational assessment.
- EDP 6733 Multicultural Assessment and Intervention
 - Prevention and Intervention At-Risk Hispanic Families (Section)
 (3-0) 3 hours credit.
 Course provides theory and research related to assessment, prevention, and intervention needs found with cultural diversity. Emphasis is on understanding the nature and impact of exposure to

childhood risks on literacy, physical development, and mental health development of Hispanic families and their children within a developmental framework.

BBL Required Courses:

- ESL 5013 Foundations of Second Language Acquisition
(3-0) 3 hours credit.
Study of principles, theories, and issues in second language acquisition and bilingualism, with implications for language teaching.
- Or
- BBL 7133 Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition
(3-0) 3 hours credit.
Theories and research in bilingualism, multilingualism, and second language acquisition. Emphasis on the linguistic, cognitive, and motivational factors in the study of language acquisition.
- And
- BBL 5053 Assessment in Bilingual and ESL Programs
(3-0) 3 hours credit.
Critical review of research in the areas of testing linguistically diverse students and the sociocultural dimensions of standardized testing, academic achievement, and accountability. Study of process for assessing language proficiency and content-area knowledge in bilingual and English as a Second Language programs. Critical evaluations of standardized tests of language proficiency and literacy, and development of alternative and authentic language, literacy and content-area assessment techniques.

6. **Faculty List.** Because this certificate draws from existing course offerings, initially three full-time faculty members from EDP and three full-time faculty members from BBL will be appointed to the certificate program. Additional EDP and BLL faculty will support the program as needed.

The certificate program appointed faculty members are:

Dr. Victor Villarreal, Assistant Professor (EDP).
Dr. Felicia Castro-Villarreal, Assistant Professor (EDP).
Dr. Norma Guerra, Associate Professor (EDP).
Dr. Wayne Wright, Professor (BBL).
Dr. Becky Huang, Assistant Professor (BBL).
Dr. Belinda Flores, Professor, (BBL).

Additional faculty who will support the program are:

Dr. Juliet Langman, Professor, (BBL).
Dr. Kristen Lindahl, Assistant Professor (BBL).
Dr. Peter Sayer, Associate Professor (BBL).
Dr. Margarita Machado-Casas, Associate Professor (BBL).

7. **Program Administration.** The LABPA Certificate will be housed in the Educational Psychology Department, whose members will support students. The program director will be a qualified faculty member from the EDP department. Currently, Dr. Victor Villarreal will serve as the Program Advisor. The Program Advisor will work with a liaison in BBL to oversee admissions and advising activities for certificate applicants. The Program Advisor will be responsible for overseeing the processes related to admissions' decisions, supervising students' progress, preparing certificate plans for students, and working with the Dean's Office in the College of Education and Human Development to certify students who have completed the requirements for the certificate. Students who declare the certificate will be admitted as a special student in EDP. The Program Advisor will also work with an Advisory Committee, consisting of EDP faculty members. The Advisory Committee will participate in decision-making about advising, recruitment, scheduling courses, and program policies. Certificates will be awarded upon completion of the 15 approved UTSA hours in the areas of bilingual psychoeducational assessment and foundations of bilingualism with a GPA of 3.0 or above and completion of the bilingual psychoeducational assessment project portfolio.
8. **Admissions Requirements.** As per the 2013-2015 Graduate Catalogue: "Students who are not currently enrolled in a graduate degree program will be required to apply for admission to UTSA as a special graduate student and to indicate their intent to seek admission into a certificate program. Applicants will be required to meet University admission requirements for *special graduate students*. Once admitted as a special graduate student, the student will contact the Certificate Program Advisor and complete a form requesting permission to enter and complete the certificate program. The LABPA Program Advisor and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development will sign the form. A copy of this form will be sent to the Graduate School."

As previously noted, departmental entrance requirements include:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited university in an approved area of study (e.g., psychology, education).
 - A master's or doctoral degree from an accredited university in an approved area of study (e.g., school psychology, educational diagnostician) or completion of graduate level coursework in academic and cognitive assessment
 - Successful completion of a state-mandated Spanish proficiency test (e.g. Texas Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test – Spanish)
 - To maintain enrollment in the certificate program, students should maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout tenure in the program.
9. **Projected Enrollments.** While the certificate is likely to draw new students to UTSA, it is likely that UTSA graduates would pursue this certificate. This certificate will increase the student's marketability in the field for job placement. Many students in SPSY are already asking about the certificate.

Table 1. Projected Admissions and Enrollments

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Admissions | 10 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 10 |
| Enrollments | 10 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 |

It is expected that a majority of students enrolling in the LABPA certificate program would come from student's enrolled in the UTSA school psychology master's degree program and those enrolled in school psychology programs in area universities.

10. Budget.

There are no additional funds requested in the management of this certificate beyond the specific course associated fees.

11. Endorsements. The Bilingual Psychoeducational Assessment Certificate is a collaboration between the EDP and BBL departments and both department chairs have reviewed, accepted, and provided a letter of support for the proposal.

- Dr. Norma Guerra, Chair, Department of Educational Psychology, UTSA
- Dr. Belinda Flores, Chair, Department of Bicultural and Bilingual Studies, UTSA

12. Evaluations/Reviews. Evaluation of the certificate program will be conducted annually (see Table 2). Student portfolios will be used for formative and summative assessment. Student progress will be evaluated formatively based on success in UTSA approved LABPA Certificate coursework. Upon completion of each semester of coursework, students will submit their portfolios with the application for review completed to date. The portfolio will include items demonstrating mastery of coursework and the application of bilingual psychoeducational assessment techniques as well as a student self-assessment of progress. The Program Advisor will review the application and portfolio using the annual review rubric (see attached). Upon completion of review by the student's Program Advisor, LABPA Certificate faculty will approve the review results. The summative evaluation will include student GPA of 3.0 or better in the certificate area coursework and a final portfolio (including a culminating project in bilingual psychoeducational assessment). We will also include attrition rates and completion rates in the general certificate evaluation.

The final portfolio must include:

- Cover letter stating progress and development, summary of activities related to educational foundation and bilingual psychoeducational assessment
- Transcripts
- Log of applied bilingual psychoeducational assessment experiences
- Completed bilingual psychoeducational assessment portfolio project, which may include professional work or research artifacts that are evidence of application of course learning to professional work. All

artifacts will include a narrative explaining how theory and principles have been appropriately utilized.

- A current CV or resume.

Table 2. Outcomes and Evaluation Artifact Measures

| Outcome | Evaluation Measure |
|---|--|
| Demonstration of ethical considerations and adherence to ethical principles of psychological assessment in working with diverse individuals. | Ethics of multicultural assessment from EDP 6733 (score 80% or better) |
| Demonstration of knowledge of definitions, characteristics, principles, and concepts related to bilingualism and second-language acquisition. | Obtaining 80% or better on foundational coursework (BBL 5053 and ESL 5013 or BLL 7133) |
| Knowledge of definitions, principles, processes, concepts, and measurement tools related to Bilingual Psychological Assessment. | Demonstration of competence in the use of bilingual psychoeducational assessment measures (score 80% better on hypothetical casework for each measure) in EDP 6343 |
| Competence in Bilingual Psychological Assessment and selection appropriate assessment measures. | Successful completion of comprehensive psychoeducational assessment as part of the practicum (EDP 6833) and must have an overall GPA of 3.0 |

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