

PSYCHODIAGNOSTICS III:
COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT
OF LEARNING DISABILITIES: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

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Office hours by appointment by e mail

Course Description

This course provides a broad overview of the assessment of the psychological and educational problems encountered by children and adults with learning disabilities during their inevitably altered developmental trajectory. The course format will consist of a two hour lecture per week, and an additional two hours for a lab which will offer students the chance to observe more experienced testers demonstrate test batteries and later to conduct assessments themselves while being observed. Because the course is an attempt to integrate different perspectives on learning disabilities, essential background material on the neuropsychology of learning disabilities will be covered in lectures and readings so that assessment can proceed from an informed theoretical perspective. Thus, the course is designed to teach not only what test to give and how to properly administer that test, but also to provide a rationale for why a given test is necessary and what part functions it addresses. Students are expected to know how each of the tests within a subcategory (i.e. attention) measure different aspects of the construct. Although students will be expected to master the entire WIAT II, the focus of the course will not be on “giving lots of tests” or omnibus batteries. Instead, students will be helped both through lecture and supervision to choose the appropriate instrument or part of a test to best answer a clinical question. It goes without saying that students are expected to become familiar with the manuals and standardization processes of all the tests listed. By the end of the semester, students will be expected to be able to evaluate a WISC IV protocol and decide on the basis of the patterning of the scores which additional instruments would best assess the given problem and to administer and interpret a full psychoeducational battery. Although the course will not focus on the Rorschach and other projective tests, it is expected that the student integrate these materials into their final test report. There will also be a focus during the lab on the close observation of behaviors that are not necessarily manifest in test scores, but which can provide further information about the patient’s processing issues and their adjustment to those issues.

The three syndromes studied are:

- 1) developmental language disorders, particularly Specific Reading Disability
- 2) right hemisphere learning disorders.
- 3) attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

While for diagnostic purposes, these are treated as discrete categorical entities, the focus of the course will be on seeing disorders of attention, language, memory and perception as existing on a continuum. Hence, the skills learned in evaluation these disorders will be applicable to a wide range of patients.

Most of the reading material is available on the course web site. Access it through the City College Library. Go to quick links, Library, Quick links to selected resources, course reserves and look under my name, choose the current course from the menu. The password will be psylweinstein

Grading

30% Three brief in- class quizzes which cover the reading material

10% Proper Test Administration

10% In class assessment of WISC IV protocol and suggestions for further testing

50% One comprehensive integrated psychoeducational assessment

It is your option to substitute a short research paper (3 – 5) pages for one of the exams, on a topic that can be discussed with me. One could also choose to write a review of the relative strengths and weaknesses of a specific test, comparing it to other assessment instruments that purport to measure the same function. Finally, one could choose to develop a test instrument to elucidate a particular process, and to critique that instrument. However, these papers must be due on the day of the exam. If they are not, you receive a 0 for the exam. If an exam grade on the first two tests is below expectation, you are allowed to resubmit the exam for a potential increase of one grade. There are no incompletes given in the course. Not finishing is an F.

Suggested Background Reading

Fletcher, J. Lyon, G. R., Fusch, L., Barnes, M. (2007). *Learning Disabilities: From Identification to Intervention*. The Guilford Press: New York, London

Swanson, J. L., Harris, K. R., & Graham, S. (2006). *Handbook of Learning Disabilities*. The Guilford Press: New York, London

Shaywitz, S. (2003) *Overcoming Dyslexia*. New York: Knopf

Weinstein, L. (2003) *Reading David: A Mother and Son's Journey Through the Labyrinth of Dyslexia* New York: Penguin

Rothstein, A. Benjamin, L. Crosby, M. Eisenstadt, K (1988) Chapters One and Four: *Learning Disorders: An Integration of Neuropsychological and Psychoanalytic Considerations*. Madison, Ct. International Universities Press.

Course Syllabus and Readings: Psychological Aspects of Learning Disabilities

Week One: Introduction: What is a Learning Disability? The Use of the Diagnostic Interview and review of WISC IV scores that might point to the indication of a Learning Disability

WISC IV manual

Learning Disabilities: From Identification to Intervention: Chapter 3: Classification, Definition and identification of Learning Disabilities

Week Two - Six: Dyslexia and Language Based Learning Disability

Understanding the Reading Process

Lyon, G. R. (1995) Toward a definition of dyslexia. *Annals of dyslexia*, 45, 3 - 25.

Aaron, P.G. (1995) Differential diagnosis of reading disabilities. *School Psychology Review*, 24, 345 - 360.

Learning Disabilities: From Identification to Intervention Chapters 5-7

Neurobiological Aspects of Dyslexia

Shaywitz, S. & Shaywitz, B. (2001). The neurobiology of reading and dyslexia. *Focus on Basics*, 5, 1 - 14.

McCandliss, B., & Noble, K. (2003) The development of reading impairment: A cognitive neuroscience model. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Review*, 9, 106 - 204.

Paulescu, D., DeMonet, J., Fazio, F. et al. (2001) Dyslexia : Cultural diversity and biological unity. *Science*, 291,

Molfese, D. (2000). Predicting dyslexia at 8 years of age using neonatal brain responses. *Brain and Language*, 72, 238-245.

Temple, E. Deutsch, Poldrack, Miller, Tallal, P. Marzenich & Gabrieli (2003). Neural deficits in children with dyslexia ameliorated by behavioral remediation. Evidence from functional MRI. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States*, 100, 2860-2865.

Dimos, P.G., Fletcher, J. M., Bergman, E., Breier, et al. (2002). Dyslexia specific brain activation profile becomes normal following successful remedial training. *Neurology*, 58,

1203-1213. Can be found on the web at:
<http://neurology.org/cgi/content/abstract/58/8/1203>.

Collins, D., & Rourke, B.P. (2003). Learning-disabled Brains: A review of the literature. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, 25, 1011-1034. (City College Full Text).

Psychological Aspects

Arkowitz (2000) The over stimulated state of dyslexia. *JAPA*

Migden, S. (1998) Dyslexia and self control: An ego psychoanalytic perspective.

Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 53, 283 - 299.

McNulty, M. (2003) Dyslexia and the life course. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36, 363-381.

Assessment of Reading Disability (This list is by no means comprehensive, but is a representative sample of the types of instruments used to assess the central components of the reading process.

Tests of Phonological Processing

Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test

WIAT Pseudoword Decoding, Analysis of Spelling errors

Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing

Woodcock Johnson Spelling of Sounds, Incomplete Words, Sound Blending, Letter Word Identification

Woodcock Reading Mastery Word Attack

Fluency

Woodcock Johnson Reading Fluency, Math Fluency

Rapid Automatized Naming

Comprehension

WIAT II Reading Comprehension

Gray Oral Reading IV

Woodcock Reading Mastery Cloze Passages

Spelling and Writing

Treiman, R. & Bourassa, D. (2000) The development of spelling skill. *Topics in Language disorders*, 20, 1 - 18.

Stacher, D. Dysgraphia Handout

Learning Disabilities: From Identification to Intervention Written Expression Disabilities: Chapter 9

Assessment of Writing Problems

WIAT II Writing, Spelling

Woodcock Johnson Writing Fluency, Extended Writing Samples, Spelling of Sounds

Test of Written Language (TOWL)

Language Based Learning Disabilities (Not Specific Reading Disability)

Shoshana Goldman (handout) Highlights of Early Language development.

Assessment of Oral Language

WIAT II Oral Language Section

Boston Naming Test (Expressive Function)

Peabody Picture Vocabulary

Woodcock Johnson: Understanding Directions, Listening Comprehension, Oral Comprehension

Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals IV

First Unit Test

Week Seven and Eight Nonverbal Learning Disabilities

Rourke, B. & Tsatsanis, K. (1996) Syndrome of nonverbal learning disabilities; Psycholinguistic assets and deficits. *Topics in Language Disorder*, 1996, 16, 30 - 44.

Collins, D. & Rourke, B. (2003). Learning-disabled brains: A review of the literature. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, 25, 7: 1011-1034

Dimitrovsky, L. Spector, H., Levy Shiff, R. and Vakil, E. (1998) Interpretation of facial expressions of affect in children with learning disabilities with verbal or nonverbal deficits. (To be distributed in class)

Little, S. (1998) Nonverbal learning disabilities and socioemotional functioning: a review of recent literature. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 26, 652 - 665.

Week Nine Assessment of Spatial and Perceptual Abilities:

WISC IV Scores tapping into spatial and perceptual skills

The Woodcock Johnson III Spatial Tests – Spatial Relations, Visual Spatial Thinking

The Rey Osterreith Complex Figure

Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning – Tests of Visual Memory

Second Unit quiz Nonverbal Learning Disability

Week Ten - Twelve: Attention Deficit Disorder

Neuropsychological Aspects

Seidman, L. (2006). Neuropsychological functioning in people with ADHD across the lifespan. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 26 (4) 466-485.

Halperin, J. & Schulz, K. (2006). Revisiting the role of the prefrontal cortex in the pathophysiology of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Psychological bulletin*, 132 (4) 560 – 581.

Panskepp, J. (1998) Attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, psychostimulants and intolerance of childhood playfulness: A tragedy in the making.

Semrud-Clikeman, M., Pliska, S., Liotti, M. (2008). Executive functioning in children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder: combined type with and without a stimulant medication history. *Neuropsychology*, 22 (3) 329-340.

Psychological Aspects

Morrel, A. (1998) Attention deficit disorder and its relationship to narcissistic pathology. In *Narcissistic disorders in children and adolescents: Diagnosis and treatment*. New Jersey: Jason Aronson.

Gilmore, K. (1998) Diagnosis dynamics and development: considerations in the psychoanalytic assessment of children with AD/HD. *JAPA*

Gilmore, K. (2000) A psychoanalytic perspective on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
JAPA 48/4 1260 - 1275.

Week Twelve Assessment of Attentional Disorders/Executive Functioning

The Continuous Performance Test

Tower

Decision Making

DKEFS

Test of Everyday Attention

Stroop

Wisconsin Cart Sort

Finger Windows

Woodcock Johnson Auditory Attention

Unit Test Three: Attention

Week Thirteen and Fourteen: The Developmental Context

Freud, A. (1965) The concept of developmental lines. In *Normality and Pathology in Childhood*. New York: International Universities Press.

Weil, A. (1970) The basic core. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 25:442-460.

Weil, A. (1978) Maturational variations and genetic-dynamic issues. . *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 26:461-492.

Cohen, J. (1985) Learning disabilities and adolescence: developmental considerations

To be distributed in class

Pine, F. (1985) Disturbances of learning and behavior in childhood. In *Developmental Theory and Clinical Process*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Week Fifteen: Conceptualizing the Problem: Towards an integration, treating the psychological aspects of learning disabilities

Rothstein, A. & Glenn, J. (1998) Learning Disabilities and Psychoanalysis (Chapters to be distributed in class)

In class assessment of WISC IV protocol.