Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology

Foundations Learning Disabilities (826:557)
Spring 2019
Tuesdays, 5:00-7:45p.m.

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Course Description:
In keeping with a practitioner-scholar model, this course will provide students with a strong conceptual and empirical foundation in learning disability research and eligibility and assessment procedures with consideration of legal and ethical issues. In addition, evidence-based interventions for reading, writing, and math learning disabilities will be reviewed. Students will be provided with extensive experiences in administering and interpreting standardized academic tests, integrating this data within a comprehensive assessment battery, and communicating assessment results and recommendations both orally and as part of written assignments.

Course Objectives:
1. To enhance students’ knowledge of the history of learning disabilities (LDs), IDEA definition of specific learning disabilities, and methods of SLD identification as outlined in the federal definition.

2. To enhance students’ ability to differentiate SLD from other conditions that affect learning such as intellectual disability and other disorders affecting cognition.

3. Students will critically examine current SLD assessment practices in the schools and debate proposed models developed by scholars in the field.

4. To enhance students’ knowledge of and competency in administering, scoring, and interpreting standardized academic assessment instruments, such as Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Fourth Edition (WJ IV ACH) and the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Third Edition (WIAT-III). Students must independently review and practice all administration and scoring procedures of all covered instruments outside of class; students are encouraged to contact the TA with specific questions about administration and scoring.

5. To refine students’ report writing skills, emphasizing the integration of cognitive test data, academic test scores, social-emotional assessments, and behavioral/qualitative information.
6. Case studies will be reviewed and discussed in class in order to provide students opportunities to practice identifying SLD.

**Course Policies:**
Foundations of Learning Disability is a core doctoral course required for school psychology graduate students in the Psy.D. School Psychology Program. Students not admitted to the School Psychology Program must secure approval from the instructor prior to registering for this course. Successful completion of Individual Cognitive Assessment 633 or an equivalent course with faculty approval must occur before enrolling in this course. Thus, students are assumed to be competent in administration, scoring, and interpretation of the well-known standardized cognitive assessment instruments (e.g., WJ IV COG, WISC-V, SB-5).

1. **Attendance** – Students are expected to be punctual and attend all classes. If a student needs to miss a class for any reason (illness, emergency, etc.), please email the instructor before class. Students are fully responsible for all assignments due and/or missed coursework resulting from missed classes. Any student who misses more than two class meetings may have his or her semester grade decreased by ½ grade and/or may result in an administrative drop from the course.

2. **Participation** – Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class and actively participate in class discussions. Use of technology is permitted for note-taking purposes but may be restricted if it becomes a distraction from class participation. Students are ultimately responsible for learning course content and readings.

3. **Assignments** – Students are required to complete all assignments by the due dates specified in the course schedule. The instructor reserves the right to mark down late assignments by ½ grade per day late.

4. **Signing out Test Kits** – Students will be required to sign out test kits from the Testing Library (e.g., WJ-IV ACH, WIAT-III etc). Students must make arrangements with the person in charge of disseminating test kits (classkits@gsapp.rutgers.edu). Students may need to share a kit. In addition, please refer to clinic guidelines for checking out test kits and test protocols.

5. **Academic Integrity** – Students are required to submit completed protocols for achievement tests that have been administered to real individuals. All protocols should be original and completed independently from peers. If the teaching assistant or professor suspect that data or protocols have been fabricated in any way, the appropriate procedure set by the Academic Integrity Office will be followed. Students are referred to the Academic Integrity Policy: [https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2014/11/AI_Policy_2013.pdf](https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2014/11/AI_Policy_2013.pdf)

**Evaluation and Course Requirements:**
Students will be evaluated on the following assignments:

1. **Class Participation- [10% of grade]**
   Students are expected to contribute to class discussions about case studies and research presented in class. Participation is defined as critical thinking, asking relevant questions, and providing appropriate recommendations. These activities are designed to
develop conceptual understanding and to enhance students’ applied skills necessary for effectively assessing and planning for children with learning or developmental difficulties. Because practicing school psychologists are expected to analyze material, make judgments, and communicate in the midst of group settings, it is essential that doctoral students participate fully during in-class discussions and seek out additional support when needed.

2. Group Presentations/Debate of Learning Disability Identification Methods- [20% of grade]
In groups of 2, students will choose an SLD assessment practice or model to research. Each group should be prepared with a presentation on the practice/model they chose. Once the presentations are complete, the class will have a debate on the different practices/models.

3. Achievement Testing Competencies – [15% of grade]
All students will be required to become proficient in administering, scoring, and interpreting the Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement (WJ IV ACH) and Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Third Edition (WIAT-III) as well as other related measures for conducting a comprehensive child evaluation.

   a) For the WJ IV ACH, each student will administer and score the entire battery [i.e., standard and extended battery] two times with non-referred subjects (friends, family members). Students must carefully review all manuals and extensively practice the batteries outside of class before administrations.

   After each administration, students will enter data into the wjscore.com scoring platform or QGlobal. Both grade and age level scoring should be printed out and compared. The two print outs must be handed into the TA with each completely administered and scored WJ IV ACH protocol prior to the specified due date.

   Students must obtain a “proficient” grade on the administration and scoring of both WJ IV ACH protocols. The criteria for a proficient grade will be discussed in class and presented to students in writing. Students who do not achieve a proficient grade will have to meet with the course instructor to discuss the need for remediation or re-administrations. Once the proficient grade for both administrations is obtained, students will seek out to schedule a mock administration (competency exam) on the WJ IV ACH standard battery only with the assigned TA. Students will be told the age and grade of the mock case before the mock administration. If students fail the mock administration, they will be given the opportunity to sit for another mock administration with the TA.

   ***IMPORTANT - students must administer and score the WJ IV ACH and obtain proficient grade on the mock administration before starting their required “real” psycho-educational evaluation.

   b) For the WIAT-III, each student will administer and score the standard battery only one time with a non-referred subject (friends, family members). Students must
carefully review all manuals and extensively practice the batteries outside of class before administration.

After administration, students will enter data into the *scoring program*. The completed test record form and computer printouts are then given to the assigned TA. Both grade and age level scoring should be printed out and compared.

Students must obtain a proficient grade on the administration and scoring on the one WIAT-III protocol. Students who do not achieve a proficient grade will have to meet with the course instructor to discuss the need for remediation or re-administration.

[Please note - test protocols handed in late will receive a partial (1/2 grade) grade deduction. Please be considerate to your TA.]

*For advanced standing students who are currently using the WJ-IV ACH, and/or WIAT-III under clinical supervision*, equivalent copies of actual practice-based cases can be used to fulfill this requirement. Students must demonstrate a passing grade in scoring before starting their required psycho-educational evaluation.

4. **WJ IV Achievement Testing Report** – [10% of grade]
Students will complete one Educational report based on the results of the WJ-IV Achievement Assessment administered to either a non-referred subject or to a case at their school-based practicum. The case used for this report can be the same case used for the Psycho-Educational Comprehensive Report. This report should include the following sections: Reason for Referral, Assessment Instruments, Background Information, Testing Observation, Assessment Results, Summary, & Scoring Tables. This report should be used to obtain feedback prior to completing the Comprehensive Report. All reports should be thoroughly reviewed for typos and writing errors prior to turning in.

5. **Psycho-educational Comprehensive Report** - [25% of grade]
Students will complete one psycho-educational evaluation/report under supervision of their school-based practicum. Students are responsible for securing a case through their practicum school site. In the unlikely event that students are not able to get a satisfactory case, students must approach the course instructor by early February (at the latest) to discuss the matter. However, students are ultimately responsible for securing appropriate cases. Comprehensive reports should take into consideration the feedback provided on the Achievement Testing Report. All reports should be thoroughly reviewed for typos and writing errors prior to turning in.

6. **Psycho-educational Comprehensive Case Presentation** – [20% of grade]
Students will present, in class, the detailed findings of their psycho-educational evaluations. Students should expect to present their testing case for 25 minutes and then allow for 10 minutes of group discussion and questions. Student presentations must follow the SLD frameworks taught in class and critically discuss their decision making of
SLD inclusion and exclusion criteria. Copies of ALL test results (in table format) must be distributed to the class with de-identifying information. Specific details about this assignment will be provided.

**Grading Policies and Classroom Rules:**
This course requires students to provide clinical assessment services to children and families. Students should strive to think, speak, and act as psychologists during class meetings, in school setting, and if applicable, at all times in the clinic. Thus, it is imperative that class start on time and that students listen to one another’s comments respectfully and contribute to the classroom discussion in a professional and constructive manner. Case material, to the extent that it involves actual children and families, is kept strictly confidential. **Only client’s pseudonyms are used in class.**

Policy regarding Academic Dishonesty and Unprofessional Conduct. Students are expected to abide by the APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct and the ethical code of conduct and policies regarding academic dishonesty/plagiarism. Assignments for this class must represent original, independent work of each student. In instances where references are required, all sources must be appropriately cited. Submission of work previously or simultaneously submitted in another course is prohibited. Academic dishonesty or unprofessional conduct may result in failure of an assignment, failure of the entire course, and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

**Disability Statement.** If you need accommodations due to a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform the instructor immediately. Please see the instructor privately before or after class. To request academic accommodations (e.g., extra time and private rooms for examinations), students must first submit documentation to the Office of Disability Services. Reasonable accommodations will be developed in cooperation with students and instructors. These accommodations must be consistent with course requirements.

**Required Textbooks/Readings and Course Materials:**

| EDITORS: Vincent Alfonso and Dawn Flanagan |
| PUBLISHER: Wiley |

*** Journal articles and additional required readings are posted on the Sakai website

**Supplementary Readings Relevant to Course:**


**Course Schedule:**

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<tr>
<th>Class/Date</th>
<th>Topics Covered</th>
<th>Class Readings/ Materials</th>
<th>Assignment(s) Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEK 1</td>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sakai</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Hallahan &amp; Mercer (2001)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/22/19</td>
<td>- Review syllabus, procedures for checking out kits/ protocols&lt;br&gt;- Topic: History/Overview of the field of LD</td>
<td><strong>Textbook</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Chapter 1, Overview of SLD</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEEK 2</td>
<td><strong>DEFINING LEARNING DISABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sakai</strong>&lt;br&gt;- DOE (2006) [IDEA 2004]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/29/19</td>
<td>- Definition of LD, IDEA 2004&lt;br&gt;- Federal regulations in identifying LD&lt;br&gt;- Methods of LD identification in practice: RTI, Discrepancy Model, PSW</td>
<td><strong>Textbook</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Chapter 7, RTI Approach&lt;br&gt;- Chapter 8, Using RTI to Identify SLD</td>
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<td>WEEK 3</td>
<td><strong>LINKING PSYCH TO ED</strong></td>
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<td>2/5/19</td>
<td>- Review of CHC Theory&lt;br&gt;- Ways to understand achievement results&lt;br&gt;- PSW Models (if time allows)</td>
<td>- Mascolo webinar&lt;br&gt;<a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/7030292025240412929">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/7030292025240412929</a></td>
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<td><strong>Textbook</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Chapter 12, PSW Made Easy</td>
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| WEEK 4 2/12/19 | PSW MODELS + GUEST LECTURE  **Combined session on Tuesday 2/12**  
- Curriculum Based Assessment- 
  *Presented by Dr. Adam Lekwa*  
- Methods of LD identification in practice, Cont’d from Week 2  
- Review of Dual-Discrepancy Consistency Model  
  **Sakai**  
  - Flanagan, Fiorello, & Ortiz (2010) |
| WEEK 5 2/19/19 | WOODCOCK-JOHNSON TESTS OF ACHIEVEMENT- 4TH EDITION  
- Review of the test (TA)  
- Administration demonstration (TA)  
  - WJ IV ACH manual/test kits (all administration and scoring procedures should be read prior to class) |
| WEEK 6 2/26/19 | DEBATE/ INTERPRETATION  
- Presentations and Debate of Methods of LD Identification  
- Interpretation of the WJ-IV ACH  
  **See assignment description for relevant readings.**  
  **Sakai**  
  WJ IV Assessment Service Bulletin #11 |
| WEEK 7 3/5/19 | PART 1 OF 2: REPORT WRITING IN LD ASSESSMENT  
- Referral concern, records review, background info, instrument selection, behavioral observations  
  WJ IV protocol #1 due w/ informed consent |
| WEEK 8 3/12/19 | SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES  
- Identification of SLD in Reading (i.e., Dyslexia) & Math  
- Flanagan webinar – Math LD Case Study  
  **Sakai**  
  - Proctor, Mather, & Stephens WJ IV ACH Assessment Bulletin #6  
  **Textbook**  
  - Chapter 2, SLD in Reading  
  - Chapter 3, SLD in Math |
<p>| 3/19/19 | NO CLASS <em><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></em> |</p>
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<tr>
<th>WEEK 9</th>
<th>PART 2 OF 2: REPORT WRITING IN LD ASSESSMENT</th>
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| 3/26/19| ● Interpretation of cognitive and achievement data, educational implications  
|        | ● Case discussions  
|        | ● XBASS (TA)  
|        | ● IQ-Achievement discrepancy procedures/issues/trends |

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 10</th>
<th>WJ-IV ACH COMPETENCY CHECKS</th>
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<tr>
<td>4/2/19</td>
<td>Schedule with TA</td>
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<tr>
<th>WEEK 11</th>
<th>WECHSLER INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT TEST- 3RD EDITION</th>
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| 4/9/19  | ● Review of the test (TA)  
|         | ● Administration demonstration (TA)  
|         | ● Interpretation  
|         | - WIAT-III manual/test kits  
|         | **Sakai**  
|         | - WIAT-III Handouts  
|         | - Fletcher et al., 1998 |

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 12</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION/ SPECIAL TOPICS</th>
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| 4/16/19 | ● SLD in Written Expression and Oral Language  
|         | ● Differential Diagnosis of SLD from Other Conditions (Low Ability, Cultural/Linguistic Diversity, ADHD, etc.)  
|         | ● Executive Functioning and Memory  
|         | **Sakai**  
|         | - Singer & Bashir (1999)  
|         | - Semrud-Clikeman (2005)  
|         | **Textbook**  
|         | - Chapter 9, Neuropsych Contributions |

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 13</th>
<th>OFF-SITE SESSION: APPLICATIONS</th>
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| 4/23/19 | ● Testing case discussions, troubleshooting  
|         | ● Effective Communication of Psych-Ed findings orally and in writing  
|         | **Sakai**  
|         | - Ch. 15, Lovett and Kilpatrick (2018)  
|         | - Sample Case and Report Templates  
|         | WIAT-III protocol due w/ informed consent  
|         | **Sakai Post** |

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<th>WEEK 14</th>
<th>CASE PRESENTATIONS</th>
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| 4/30/19 | **Textbook**  
|         | - Chapter 12, Differential Diagnosis |

<p>|                  | Psycho-Ed Case Presentations |</p>
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<tr>
<th>WEEK 15</th>
<th>CASE PRESENTATIONS</th>
<th>Psycho-Ed Case Presentations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/7/19</td>
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<td>Psycho-Ed Report Due</td>
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