SW 614 Uses and Implications of Psychological Testing for Social Work

Winter 2014  Instructor: Steven Foley LMSW PhD
Tuesday, 6:00 to 9:00 PM  Phone: 734 223 9078 cell (cell, text or VM)
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Office:2760 SSWB  Office hours by appointment

1. Course Description

This course will cover a range of types of testing including cognitive, learning, personality, speech, visual-motor and behavioral assessment approaches. In addition to formal psychological testing, the course will also discuss an array of assessment approaches that are relevant to the role of a school social worker. The primary emphasis of this course will be on learning testing and assessment information that will be useful in working with youth in educational settings.

2. Course Content

This class presents psychological testing as applied in educational and mental health settings. It covers some of the historical development of testing, its social functions, the technology of testing, and tests commonly used in schools and clinics. Social consequences of testing, and legal, and public policy issues are also discussed. The implication of testing on various diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender including gender identity and gender expression, marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sec, and sexual orientation will be presented.

3. Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Understand assessment instruments commonly used in mental health, and particularly in educational settings.
2. Interpret commonly used psychological tests, and the relationship of this information to the assessment data that is generated by other professionals on an assessment team, i.e., social workers, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, etc.
3. Describe the ethical issues related to the use of testing materials and results.
4. Use assessment instruments that are appropriate for social work evaluations.
5. Describe limitations of testing data including test reliability, validity, measurement error, and test bias.
6. Know the relationship of tests and testing to the goals of the client, the agency, the community, and the applicable laws and regulations, particularly special education rules.
7. Understand the dynamics of sharing assessment results with clients and families and its impact on placement, program planning, and treatment or interventions.
8. Conduct effective assessment interviews with parents.
9. Describe assessment issues related to special populations/disorders such as attention disorders, Autism Spectrum Disorder, child bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety.

4. Course Design

The course will include lectures, demonstrations, readings, and discussions regarding a broad range of assessment issues. Case examples will be presented and discussed and students are encouraged to contribute examples of assessment issues and concerns for discussion.

5. Relationship of the Course to the Four Curricular Themes

-Multiculturalism and Diversity will be explored through investigating the relationship between types of testing and its potential for differential impact on various populations in regard to such diversity dimensions as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sec, and sexual orientation. This will include discussions of incidents of the inappropriate use of testing, both past and present as it pertains to these various populations.

-Social Justice and Social Change and it relationship to testing and assessment will be explored particularly as it relates to the impact of assessment methods on inappropriate labeling and/or placement decisions. Emphasis will also be placed on exploring the current national campaign for accountability through systematic testing and the resulting misuse of testing. The impact of intervening variables in test results will also be discussed particularly as they relate to students and communities that are of lower socioeconomic characteristics.

-Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation and the role of testing and measurement will be explored with particular emphasis on the limits of test results in making decisions regarding diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitative decisions.

-Behavioral and Social Science Research will be present in this course to support the theoretical, statistical, and clinical basis for test designs and assessment procedures. Research will also be referenced regarding the beneficial as well as the inappropriate use of test in particular situations.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

Social work ethics and values will be addressed within the course as they pertain to issues related to working with clients and their parents, and colleagues. The NASW Code of Ethics, and the Ethical Standards of the American Psychological Association documents will be used to give students direction about these ethical issues. In addition, relevant federal guidelines as put forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the
American with Disabilities Act, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act will be reviewed in light of their impact on ethical issues related to assessment.

7. Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS)

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate social injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

8. Students with Unique Circumstances or Learning Challenges

Students who have circumstances that could possibly put them at a disadvantage in their participation in the course should bring this to my attention as early in the course as possible. “Unique circumstances” can range from having a chronic condition such as a disability that could affect mobility, concentration, learning, or academic productivity to a transient condition such as temporary environmental stressors, economic factors, or pregnancy that may also have an impact on learning. My goal is to maximize your learning the material in the course, and this can be done through various accommodations unique to your circumstances. If you feel it would be helpful, we could also draw up in writing a set of understandings about what accommodations would be appropriate and helpful for you.

9. Textbooks

- There is no required textbook for this class.

- Some articles will be assigned for reading as they occur with particular topics.

- It has been my practice to provide bound copies of the notes which can be purchased for the cost of printing, usually about $18.

- It is not required but if you seek to become a school social worker, you should visit the Michigan Association of School Social Workers website (http://www.masswmi.org) and become a “student” member ($25 per yr.). It is a great source for information and networking for Michigan SSWs.

- Optional texts:


-Braaten, E. & Felopulos, G. (2004). *Straight Talk About Psychological Testing for Kids*. N.Y.: Guilford Press. This is a guide designed for parents to understand psychological testing and its use in the schools so they can be more informed when they advocate on behalf of their children, but also contains good basic information on the topic of testing.

10. Requirements:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Four Quizzes</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Rating Scale workup</td>
<td>10 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Attendance</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Class participation</td>
<td>5 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
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Grading Scale:  
100 - 94        A  
93  - 90         A-  
89  - 87         B+  
86  - 83         B   
82  - 80         B-  
79  - 77         C+  
76  - 73         C   
72  - 70         C-  
69  - 60         D range  
59  - Failing

Extra credit opportunities will be available for those students who are at risk for receiving a grade below a B.
11. Schedule of Classes:

#1 Jan. 14  **Introduction to Course & Background to Psychological Testing**
- Historical perspective on testing & factors that shaped modern testing.
- The domain of testing, types of testing, assets & limitations.
- Terms used in testing.
- General ethical issues in testing.
- General guidelines in special education assessments of all areas.
- Qualifications for purchasing and using tests and assessment instruments.

#2 Jan. 21  **Statistics, Psychometrics, & Understanding Scoring**
- Reliability & validity.
- Test construction
- Understanding scores & scoring systems.
- “Normalcy” & the normal curve
- Standard error of measure, confidence intervals, & score comparisons.
- Limitations of quantitative scoring systems.

#3 Jan. 28  **Intelligence (cognitive) testing**
- Theories of intelligence & definition of intelligence in IQ testing
- G factor, multi-factor theories, & task analysis interpretations
- Structure of IQ tests; how they measure what they intend to measure (special focus on the WISC-IV)
- Full cognitive batteries vs. abbreviated tests.
- Multiple intelligence, emotional intelligence, & social intelligence

#4 Feb. 4  **Assessment of Cognitive & Achievement (Learning) with the Woodcock-Johnson (CHC) system, and Response to Intervention (RtI)**
- I will be absent for this class. The lecture will be done by a guest speaker, Ms. Emily Verbeke Ed. Sp. CSP, a school psychologist with the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools.

#5 Feb. 11  **Learning Disability (LD) Assessment**
- LD defined: 8 areas of LD & components of evaluation.
- LD & the “dyslexia model”, phonological deficits, sound/symbol association.
- Sample tests: Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA II), Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT IV), & Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP II).
- Race, socio-economic status, cultural & language differences & implications for bias assessments.
*QUIZ #1 IN CLASS*

#6 Feb. 18  **Cognitive Impairment (C.I.) & Developmental Disabilities Assessment.**
- Cognitive impairment defined legally, clinically, & practically.
- Assessment of cognitive impairment.
- Bias in C.I. testing & approaches to identify/minimize bias.
- Test bias & court decisions.

**#7 Feb. 25 Behavior Rating Scales**
- Rating scales vs. structured interviews
- Self report vs. other report
- Broad spectrum vs. single disorder scales
- Rating scales as a component of an assessment “system”
- Advantages & limitations of behavior rating scales
- Understanding & controlling for response bias
- Factor analytic design in rating scales, the CBCL, Achenbach, & ASEBA.
- Sample rating scales
- Discussion of BASC-2 workup assignment

**March 4 NO CLASS - BREAK**

**#8 March 11 Adaptive Behavior, Visual-Motor, & Memory Assessment**
- Adaptive behavior defined, & its role in assessments
- Adaptive behavior & response bias
- Visual-Motor assessment; defined & explored via the Beery VMI
- Role of assessment of memory in evaluations.
- How memory is assessed; the WRAML.
*QUIZ #2 IN CLASS*

**#9 March 18 Speech & Language Assessment**
- Sp. Ed. & and speech & language
- Domains of speech & language assessment
- Expressive & receptive language
- Pragmatic speech problems

**#10 March 25 Projective & Personality Assessments**
- Projective testing: defined and classical examples (TAT, Rorschach) discussed.
- Objective personality measures: MMPI-2
- Myers-Briggs, the NEO-PI
- Children’s personality assessments: Roberts Apperception Test for Children, sentence completion procedures, & projective drawings.
- Pathology vs. personality difference based theories.
- Uses & misuses of personality tests.

**#11 April 1 Emotional & Behavioral Assessments.**
- Exclusionary considerations
- “Social Maladjustment” & EI certification
Role of testing & rating scales in EI assessment
- Clinical interviews
- Psycho-social history
- Structured observations.
- Family assessment.
- Psychologist vs. social worker in EI assessments.
- The “politics” of certification & placement.

*QUIZ #3 IN CLASS*

#12 April 8 **Assessment of Special Populations; ADHD, Anxiety, Depression**
- ADHD: psycho metric tools – broad spectrum & single disorder rating scales, continuous performance tests.
- ADHD: executive functioning defined & assessment.
- ADHD: role of outside evaluations, medical exams, & the schools
- Anxiety: differential diagnosis, and psychometric tools.
- Depression: differential diagnosis and psychometric tools
- Anxiety: family assessment.

#13 April 15 **Assessment of Special Populations: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), School Refusal, Encopresis, Selective Mutism.**
- School refusal: defined, assessed, & intervention
- Selective mutism: defined, assessed, & intervention
- Encopresis: defined, assessed, & intervention

#14 April 22 **Closure Class**
- Completion of topics not covered
- Suggestions for the “Basic Assessment Tool Box for School Social Workers” (Steve’s notions)
- Recommended books to have in ones library related to assessment when you start your career as a school social worker.

April 29 Exam Period *QUIZ #4 IN CLASS*