Department of Psychology, University of Guelph

PSYC-6010: Learning Disorders: Research and Clinical Practice

Fall 2015

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<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Dr. Arlene Young, C. Psych.</th>
<th>Ext. 58350</th>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ayoung09@uoguelph.ca">ayoung09@uoguelph.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
<td>MCKN Ext. 3004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Time:</td>
<td>Mondays: 2:30-5:20</td>
<td>Room: MCKN 305</td>
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Learning Objectives:

After completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- appreciation for a broad range of theoretical approaches to understanding learning and disorders of learning
- understanding of the controversy surrounding how learning disorders are defined and diagnosed
- knowledge of current research findings in the area of learning disorders
- ability to integrate theory and empirical findings in order to plan assessments
- emerging ability to integrate findings from several test batteries and other sources to write a clear and concise report
- knowledge of appropriate and empirically supported recommendations for children's academic programs based on their cognitive profiles
- understanding of social-emotional correlates of children with neurodevelopmental disorders
- appreciation for issues of diversity with relevance to assessment and intervention.

Course Content:

The course will present various theoretical perspectives on learning disorders as well as current research findings. We will also address other neurodevelopmental disorders that have important implications for learning such as Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The course also covers methods of assessing learning as well as standardized academic measures and measures of cognitive processing and how to write an integrative assessment report. Various assignments will be completed to facilitate this integration and to further prepare students for later clinical work and academic studies.
Course material will span preschool through adulthood, second language learners, and different cultural groups. Students will be encouraged to relate research and theory to practice. Practical and ethical issues in working with the learning disabled population will be discussed.

**Format:**

Classes meet weekly September 14th through November 30th. Each class will include lecture and discussion regarding research and theory, clinical practice considerations, and student presentations or discussion. Each week a set of common readings are to be completed by all students.

**Readings:**

Articles from journals and books listed on a reading list are required readings as seed material for class discussions. These articles are grouped as common readings for all students, and unique readings for some students. Articles are typically available via the library online journals.

**Assignments:**

1. **Contributions to the weekly seminars: (10% of final mark)** This includes preparation for class, participation in discussions, and integrating the material of one’s own unique reading and experience to class discussions. As part of their preparation for class, students will make a discussion post on the course website. The posting should be fairly brief but should highlight questions or issues that they would like to see discussed in the class to follow. This posting should be made by Sunday at noon so that I have time to incorporate the feedback into the class discussion on Monday.

2. **Critical review of an assessment measure and class presentation (20% of final mark)**

   **Preparing the written test review.** Reviews should follow the format shown on the accompanying Test Review Form (see attached). In preparing your review, pay close attention to queries concerning what the tests/subtests/items "purportedly vs. actually" assess. You will also be expected to address the theoretical rational underlying the test. Do not rely solely on test manuals or test reviewers to supply such information nor should you assume that test labels accurately reflect what is assessed. Think through the test yourself. In doing so, three strategies are suggested:

   1. Take the test yourself and reflect on what you are doing as you respond.
   2. Put yourself in the position of teaching or showing someone what they have to do to perform well on an item.
   3. Try to hypothesize about where someone would have gone wrong if they had performed poorly on the item.

   Finally, after reviewing a test, you should be competent to administer the instrument and score it. If not, you should be able to explain why. You are advised to bring a copy of the instrument.
Class presentation of test review.
In presenting your review in class you should NOT simply read everything on your completed Test Review Form. Printed copies of the completed forms should be made for distribution to the class on the day of your presentation. In addition, you should prepare a short (15-20 minute) talk that summarizes (or highlights) points in your completed written review. Your talk should place special emphasis on what in your opinion the test assesses. Following the oral synopsis, there will be time allowed for the student to demonstrate selected test items and answer questions about the test.

4. LD assessment case report. (35% of final mark) Students will be given assigned an assessment case with academic difficulties as a major concern. You will prepare a case report including background information, interpretation of a number of assessment measures and case formulation and recommendations. This assignment is designed to help you develop interpretive and report writing skills, learn about new tests, and relate research and theory to clinical work. You will have an opportunity to hand in portions of the report as you progress through the term. The first section should be handed in on October 26th (worth 20%). This will include the sections up to the overall formulation/summary and recommendations section. You will receive feedback and have the opportunity to improve your next draft and incorporate feedback for a revision and full assessment report due on November 16th (worth 15%).

5. Research into evidence-based recommendations for specific diagnoses/learning profiles (35% of final mark). This project involves students developing an in depth knowledge of a diagnostic category or learning profile and the research regarding appropriate accommodations/interventions/etc. Specific topics will be decided in consultation with course instructor. Students will develop a list of recommendations and as well as a summary of the research supporting that recommendation. Method of presentation will not be a traditional research paper, but will be in a format that would be accessible to fellow clinicians and potentially others in the education community.

E-mail Communication:
As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Academic Misconduct:
The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar:
http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1687.shtml
**Resources:**
The [Graduate Calendar](http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/) is the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations which apply to graduate programs:

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<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>Introduction, organization, and definitional Issues</td>
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<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>Perspectives on LD and assessment Reading Disorder #1</td>
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<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>Communication Disorders and Phonological Processing (test review); report-writing workshop #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Specific Learning Disorder: Reading (test review)</td>
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<td>Oct 12</td>
<td><strong><strong>No Class</strong></strong>*</td>
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<td>Oct 19</td>
<td>Specific Learning Disorder: Reading, part 2; report writing workshop #2</td>
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<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Specific Learning Disorder: Writing (test review) – <strong>LD Report draft 1 due</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>Specific Learning Disorder: Mathematics (test review)</td>
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<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder &amp; LD; LD in older ages (test review)</td>
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<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>Autistic Spectrum Disorder/NLVD/ motor disorders <strong>LD report final due</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 23</td>
<td>Implications of learning disorders for emotional well-being, self-perception and social relationships</td>
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<td>Nov 30</td>
<td>Diversity Issues – <strong>Essay on intervention due today</strong></td>
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Please understand that topics and dates may need to be altered to accommodate for student interest and discussion. A schedule of readings will be given out during the first class meeting.
Test review form:

Reviewer: ___________________________ Year of Review ______________

Area of Concern _____________________________________________

Test Name ___________________________________________________

Authors __________________________________________ Year of Publication ______

Publisher ___________________________________________________

Ages for which test is appropriate ______

Purpose of Test ______________________________________________

Time for Administration _______________________________________

Amount of training required

Format/organization of test (e.g., subtests, materials provided)

Scoring procedure and scores provided by test

Prerequisite skills for individual examined (e.g., fine motor skills, visual, auditory)

Reliability of various kinds

Validity of various kinds

Standardization sample

Generalizability (applicability) of norms

Overall evaluation of test

Advantages/Limitations
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Materials</th>
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**General Achievement Tests:**

Canadian Adult Achievement Test,  
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-III  
Peabody Individual Achievement Test-R  
Woodcock Johnson Achievement Battery--III  
Diagnostic Achievement Battery-3  
Wide Range Achievement Test-IV  
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement

**September 28:**  
**Communication Disorders, phonological processing, report-writing workshop #1**

**Reading for all:**  


**Reading for some:**  


### Language Tests:

- Comprehensive Receptive and Expressive Vocabulary Test (2002)
- Test of Language Development P3
- Test of Adolescent Language-3
- Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals-4
- Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability-3
- Expanded Test of Language Competence
- Fullerton Language Tests for Adolescents
- Expressive One Word Vocabulary Test

#### October 5 Specific Learning Disorder: Reading

**Reading for All:**


**Reading for Some:**


Assessment tools:
- Wepman Test of Auditory Discrimination (1987)
- Rosner Auditory Analysis Test
- Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test-3 (2004)
- Test of Phonological Awareness (1994)
- Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-III
- Phonological Abilities Test (1997)
- Pre-reading Inventory of Phonological Awareness (2000)
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (1999)

October 19: Specific Learning Disorder: Reading part 2


Tests of Reading:
Test of Word Reading Efficiency (1999)
Test of Reading Comprehension
Nelson Denny Reading Test
Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-R
Test of Early Reading Ability-2 (2001)

October 26: Specific Learning Disorder: Writing

Reading for All: Dockrell, J. K., Lindsay, G. & Connelly, V. (2009). The impact of specific language impairment on adolescents’ written text. Exceptional Children, 4, 427-446. (pdf)


Tests of writing /spelling:
Test of Written Language (TOWL-II)
Oral Language and Written Expression (OWLS-II)
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (2001)
Process Assessment of the Learner: Reading and Writing (2001)

November 2: Specific LD: Mathematics


Reading for Some:


Mathematics tests:
- Key Math Diagnostic Test
- Diagnostic Tests of Arithmetic Strategies
  (And achievement batteries)

November 9:

Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder from a learning perspective; LD at older ages

Readings for All:


Readings for Some:


Memory Assessment instruments:

- Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning-2nd ed.
- Subtests of Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-4th ed.
- Children’s Memory Scale
- Wechsler Memory Scales-Revised
- Subtests of Kaufman ABC
- Visual-Aural Digit Span Test
- Test of Everyday Attention-Children
- Dellis-Kaplan Executive function System
- NEPSY (Word Generation, Animal Sorting, Auditory Attention, Inhibition, Design Fluency, Clocks)

November 16: **Autistic Spectrum Disorder/ Motor Disorders/NVLD/Visual Spatial Processing**

Reading for all: DSM 5 ASD and motor disorders


Tests of visual-motor functioning/visual processing:


Test of Visual Perceptual Skills (1982)

Test of Visual Motor Skills Upper Level-Revised (1992)
Wide Range Assessment of Visual Motor Abilities

Osereitsky Scales of Motor Proficiency

**November 23rd**  
**Implications of learning disorders for emotional well-being, self-perception, and social relationships**

**Reading for All:**  


**Reading for Some:**  


November 30: DIVERSITY ISSUES

Each student to take one of the following topics:

Second Language Learners:


Hearing/vision Impaired Learners:


**Mild Mental Retardation:**


**Minority Groups and SES:**


**Post-secondary settings:**


