

Psych 592: Developmental Assessment

Instructor: Dawna Thompson, Ph.D.
Licensed Clinical Psychologist, School Psychologist
Director, GMU Cognitive Assessment Program

Phone: (703) 993-4731 (office)
(703) 618-7746 (cell)
e-mail: Dthomps7@gmu.edu

Lecture: Wednesdays 1:30 – 4:10, Psychology Clinic Classroom, Democracy Lane

Office Hours: Wednesday before or after class, or by appointment (office: 202H, Democracy Lane)

Course Overview:

Assessment of infants and preschool aged children requires special sensitivity to and knowledge of the unique characteristics of this developmental period. The pace of physical and neurological maturation may vary significantly among children of similar chronological ages. In addition, even typical young children may be difficult to assess accurately due to factors such as activity level, distractibility, wariness of strangers, and discomfort in novel environments. Further, factors such as cultural and linguistic differences, environmental disadvantage, and limited interaction with other children or unfamiliar adults can have substantial effects on the interpretation of assessment findings. This course extends other assessment training by introducing considerations and methods needed for evaluating young children (ages two – six). The skills necessary for formulating, conducting, and reporting comprehensive developmental evaluations will be the primary course focus. While the evaluation of preschool children will receive emphasis, information relating to infants, as well as older children functioning at lower developmental levels, will be included.

Course Goals

The ultimate course goal is for students to be able to obtain and integrate information into a comprehensive—but concisely written—evaluation report that will lead to appropriate interventions. This, however, requires a number of sub-objectives:

1. Discuss key considerations in the assessment of young children, as opposed to older children and adolescents, including ethical, legal and psychometric principles.
2. Describe the nature of common problems and disorders beginning in early childhood, including primary characteristics, risk factors, assessment issues, and research based interventions.
3. Plan evaluations of young children with specific, suspected problems using a comprehensive, hypothesis guided approach.

4. Determine the appropriateness of various assessment techniques and instruments for use with young children for measuring pre-academic and language skills, adaptive behavior, psychomotor functioning, and socio-emotional functioning.
5. Understand the contributions of multiple specialized disciplines to the assessment process (psychologists, pediatricians, speech therapists, vision and hearing specialists, physical and occupational therapists).
6. Administer and score selected assessment instruments.
7. Integrate and interpret assessment findings with an emphasis on preparing oral and written reports that guide interventions for young children.

Instructional Methods

Class time will include didactic presentations of material and active discussion of assigned readings. Some class sessions will be devoted to demonstrations and in-class exercises to develop skills in areas such as test administration and scoring, case formulation, and reporting of results. Application of these skills with children will be through direct work with child volunteers in the community.

Course Organization

The course is organized into instructional modules. Each module consists of materials and activities that teach a specific content area. These do not necessarily correspond, however, to specific class topics.

Module	Content
1	Early Childhood Assessment: Special Considerations and Challenges -history of early childhood assessment -controversies surrounding the use of standardized tests with young children -ethical/legal issues in assessing young children -screening and school readiness -technical/psychometric issues in early childhood assessment
2	Alternatives to Norm-Referenced Assessment -developmental and criterion based measures -play based assessment
3	Preschool Psychological Disorders -psychological disorders of infancy and early childhood -prevalence, incidence, risk factors, outcomes
4	Conceptualizing, Planning, Reporting -hypothesis based models of assessment planning -selection of appropriate assessment tools -integrating and reporting findings -linking assessment findings to recommendations

Course Requirements and Grading

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to each class session, as well as to attend class and participate fully. Final grades will be based upon an evaluation of student performance in four areas: test administration/scoring; class participation/exercises; class presentation; and a final psychological report.

Practice Test Administrations with Children: Each student is expected to administer, score and submit for review the specified number of measures listed below to children of kindergarten age or younger. Grading will be based on both completion and quality of test administration and scoring. If your protocols do not demonstrate mastery of administration/scoring techniques, you will be asked to complete additional administrations. **(30%)**

1. Denver Developmental Screening Test (DDSDT-II) – 2 children, preferably one toddler and one preschooler.
2. LAP-D: in class practice
3. Peabody Pictorial Vocabulary Test (PPVT) – 1 child (or classmate)
4. Bayley Scales of Infant Development – Third Edition (BSID-III) – 2 children, preferably one infant, one toddler
5. Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement – 1 child (or classmate)
6. Bracken School Readiness Assessment – 1 child

Class Participation and in-class exercises: In-class exercises will focus on administering the tests presented in the course. One student will role-play the child, while the other practices sections of the test. Other exercises may focus on scoring completed test protocols or planning and reporting evaluations. Overall class participation is also considered. **(10%)**

Class Presentations: Each student (or pair of students) will select a test appropriate for young children and prepare a brief class presentation covering the test. **(20%)**

Quizzes: Multiple choice and/or short answer quizzes will periodically be given, covering assigned readings, test administration, etc. **(10%)**

Final Psychological Report: You will be required to submit a written evaluation report based upon a comprehensive package of information (background, observations, test results) provided by the instructor. **(30%).**

Of Special Note:

The test interactions in this course are for learning purposes only. Test results are not considered valid and may not be communicated in any form to any individual or organization, nor may they be used as research data. All data collected and submitted must be non-identifiable to preserve confidentiality. Tests administered within the context of this course may not be used for any purpose other than learning to administer, score and interpret the assessment instruments. Any breach of this policy, or falsification of data, will result in immediate failure.

Students are expected to attend class and participate in the discussions and activities. Classroom participation involves sharing information and ideas, contributing to a positive and enthusiastic class atmosphere through asking questions and volunteering ideas. At

times, particular students, with advance notice, may be asked to lead the class in discussion of specific assessments; please bring relevant materials to class regularly.

Honor code:

The Honor Code of George Mason University deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Students should be familiar with the code and connected policies, set out at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies>. This course will be conducted in accordance with those policies.

Accommodations for students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All accommodations must be arranged through that office, and must be initiated immediately, prior to any anticipated need.

Required Texts

Brassard, M.R. and Boehm. (2007). *Preschool Assessment: Principles and Practices*.
The Guilford Press: New York **BB**

Greenspan, S. & Weider, S. (2006). *Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health: A Comprehensive Developmental Approach to Assessment and Intervention*.
American Psychiatric Publishing: Washington, D.C. **GW**

Selected chapters from Bracken and Nagle (2007), provided by instructor **BN**

Articles

Albers, Craig & Grieve, Adam (2007). Review of the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development, Third Edition. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 25 (2), 180-190.

Archibald, L.M., Joanisse, M.F. & Sheperd, M. (2008). Associations between key language-related measures in typically developing school-age children. *Journal of Psychology*, 216(3) 161-171.

Bell, S.T. & Arthur, W. (2008). Feedback acceptance in development assessment centers: the role of feedback message, participant personality, and affective response to the feedback session. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29, 681-703

Bordignon, C.M & Lam, T. (2004). The early assessment conundrum: Lessons from the past, implications for the future. *Psychology in the Schools*, 41(7), 737-749.

Peterman, F. & Macha, T. (2008). Developmental Assessment: A General Framework. *Journal of Psychology*, 216(3), 127-134

Renee, P.P. (2002). Best practices in assessing kindergarten readiness. *The California School Psychologist*, 7, 63-73.

Others as assigned, provided by instructor.

Recommended Texts

DC 0 – 3: Diagnostic and classification system for birth to three years (1994). Zero-Three: Washington, D.C.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Date	Topic 1	Topic 2	Readings	Assignments
8/31	Course Overview and Early Development in a nutshell	History of Preschool Assess./Legal Basis	BN ch.1 (provided) GW Intro, ch. 1	
9/7	Controversies and Technical Considerations	Measurement and Statistics	BB ch. 3, 11	
9/14	Conceptualizing and Planning Evals; multi-cult. Assessment	Bayley Scales: description and administration	BB 2, 9	
9/21	Observation, history taking and interviewing	Bayley Scales: scoring, practice exercises	Start Bayley manual; BB. ch. 4;	Bayley checkout
9/28	Staging and conducting preschool assessments	Bayley Scales practice	Bayley manual; BB ch. 5	
10/5	Screening; Assessing Academic Readiness	DDST admin. & practice, Bracken	Denver manual; Bracken manual Pyle BB ch.6	
10/12	Curriculum Based Assessment/ Language & Communication	Bracken admin. PPVT admin and Practice	BB ch. 7	Denver checkout Quiz
10/19	Assessing motor, neuro. Characteristics	Lap-D practice	GW: 7	(turn in Bayley) Checkout Bracken
10/26	Overview of Educational & Clinical Classification	WJ preschool assess.	BB 12, 13 GW 8, 9	(turn in Denver)

Developmental Assessment

Fall, 2011

Page 6 of 6

11/2	Assessing socio-emot., adaptive functioning	Play based assessment	BB 14 BN 11 (provided)	(turn in Bayley)
11/9	Student presentations	Student presentations	GW 2, 4	(turn in Denver, WJ, PPVT if possible)
11/16	Student presentations	Student presentations	Borg. & Lam GW 5, 6	(keep turning in Protocols)
11/23	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
12/30	Reporting of Findings	Report Writing Exercises		Final report data will be provided
12/07	Assessing infants, special populations	Wrap-up, course Evaluations	TBA	Turn in all protocols, final report