# Psycho-Diagnostic Research Methods and Assessment Tools

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***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course, divided into two modules, aims to provide the knowledge and the basic skills needed for students to carry out evaluative and psycho-diagnostic interventions in the various contexts in which the developmental psychologist is called to intervene.

At the end of *Module one*, students will be able to:

* know the characteristics of Blacky Pictures and the Rorschach test according to the Comprehensive Exner System;

– Recognise the methods for administering and scoring in the aforementioned tools;

– Begin to read and attach clinical meaning to the results of the tests, in light of the reference reading.

At the end of *Module two*, students will be able to:

* be aware of the theories and neuropsychological models that constitute the reference framework of the WISC-IV, NEPSY-II, GRIFFITHS-III scales and of the Roberts-2 test;

– recognise the application and scoring modalities for the aforementioned tests;

– interpret the meaning of the psychometric indices obtained from the tests, in light of the reference cognitive functioning models.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

– create an appropriate setting and manage the relationship with the child/adolescent before and during the test;

– administer and interpret the main level, projective and personality tests;

– produce a psycho-diagnostic report and provide an effective feedback on what emerges, so as to delineate the cognitive, relational and affective strong and weak points.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will first provide students with a basic knowledge of the general foundations of the psychological evaluation, based on the use of testing materials.

Students will then be introduced to the most commonly used tests in the field of psychodiagnosis (level tests, projective techniques, questionnaires for the assessment of adaptive and maladaptive behaviour, etc.).

More specifically, as a first stage, the psychometric characteristics of the tests and the assessment tools will be described (standardisation, sampling, raw scores and norms, reliability, validity, etc.).

The course will then focus on providing theoretical and practical indications for the administration, scoring and evaluation of tests in order to draw up an adaptation/maladjustment profile of the patient subject to psychological evaluation.

In conclusion, students will be presented the different modes of communicating the characteristics that the psychologist has to use; the course will therefore focus on the most effective communication methods for communicating with the child/adolescent and on the most useful ones for dealing with other professionals working on the case (psychologists, neuropsychiatrists, speech therapists, teachers, professional educators, social workers, etc.) and with parents, teachers and other reference adults.

Specifically, the course is divided into the following units and sub-units:

Unit 1: The clinical evaluation

Meaning and objectives

Process of clinical evaluation

The use of tests in clinical evaluation

Unit 2: The Blacky Pictures

History and description of the test

Administration

Tables and Marking

Unit 3: The Rorschach test according to Exner

History and description of the test

Administration

Labelling and Structural Summary Tables

Unit 4: The relationship

Writing the report on psychodynamic components

Unit 5: The Roberts-2 test

History and description of the test

Administration

Scoring and interpretation system

Unit 6: The representation of intelligence

Definitions of intelligence

The metaphors of mind: geographical, computational, biological, epistemological, sociological, anthropological, and systemic;

Cognitive assessment and theories: the CHC model, Luria’s model, the Boston Process Approach;

The cognitive mechanisms of intelligence: processing speed, working memory.

Unit 6: Exceptional forms of intelligence: which profiles and theoretical models

Theories concerning intellectual surplus

The socio-cognitive assessment of gifted children

High potential students: their characteristics and how to recognise them

The socio-cognitive development of gifted children

Unit 7: The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-IV

History and description of the test

Administration

Scoring system and composite indices

Interpretation

Unit 8: Writing the report

Drafting the report on the cognitive functioning profile

Drafting the integrated report on the cognitive and socio-emotional profile

***READING LIST***

Reading list for the path based on lecture contents

Materials and articles provided and suggested in class

A. Lis-A. Zennaro-S. Salcuni-L. Parolin-C. Mazzeschi, Il Rorschach secondo il Sistema Comprensivo di Exner (chaps.from 5 to 11; tot. p. 293).

L. Abbate-M. P. Andraos. Scrivere la relazione psicodiagnostica. Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2019 (chapters from 1 to 8, tot. p. 183).

Reading list for the text-based path:

Slides, material and articles provided and suggested in class

A. Lis-A. Zennaro-S. Salcuni-L. Parolin-C. Mazzeschi, Il Rorschach secondo il Sistema Comprensivo di Exner (chapters 3, 5 and from 6 to 11; tot. p.451).

L. Abbate-M. P. Andraos. Scrivere la relazione psicodiagnostica. Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2019 (chaps. 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 8, tot. p. 162).

C. Barbarotto Moso-C. Nosengo-C.M. Xella, Le Blacky Pictures di G.S. Blum., Giunti O.S., Florence, 2010 (tot. p. 95).

*Module 2*

Reading list for the path based on lecture contents:

Contents of the lectures (slides - notes)

Slides, material and articles provided and suggested in class

M. Lang-P. Di Pierro-C. Michelotti-C. Squarza, WISC-IV. Lettura dei risultati e interpretazione clinica., Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2017 (tot. p. 204).

Reading list for the text-based path:

C. Cornoldi, L’intelligenza, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2007 (tot. p. 211).

M. Lang-P. Di Pierro-C. Michelotti-C. Squarza, WISC-IV. Lettura dei risultati e interpretazione clinica., Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2017 (second part and third part; tot. p. 168).

M. Lang, I test che lo psicologo deve conoscere, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2020 (chaps. 1 and 13; tot. p. 64).

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures with examples of cases.

There are also 30 hours of tutorial work (not compulsory) aimed at helping students to better investigate and apply the procedures for evaluating the tests presented and draw up feedback reports.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students must pass the tests on both modules.

*Module one.*

a) With regard to knowledge and understanding, during the examination students will be assessed on students’ grasp of the theory reference framework discussed during lectures.

b) With regard to the ability to apply knowledge and understanding, students attending classes may choose to apply tests learnt during lectures, codify them and write a brief paper. The paper must be submitted to the tutor 20 days before the examination session. Students who do not wish to submit a paper will be given extracts from clinical Blacky and Rorschach cases and they proceed with markers and clinical analysis.

*Module two*: students’ assimilation of course material will be assessed by means of an oral test in two parts

1. With reference to knowledge and understanding, students will be assessed during the exam on their knowledge of the theoretical reference framework of the instruments covered in class.

2. With reference to the ability to apply knowledge and understanding, attending students can choose to apply the tests learned in class, code them and prepare a short paper that will be delivered to the lecturer 20 days before the exam session. Students who do not wish to do the paper will be presented with some responses from Roberts-2 clinical cases and will be asked to proceed with the initialling and clinical analysis. Furthermore, all students will be asked to comment on a WISC-IV assessment protocol, with an in-depth analysis of the psychometric and clinical significance of the reported scores.

Overall assessment will consider completeness, relevance, correctness of students' answers and appropriateness of their language, both in the drafting of the paper and in the oral interview.

In particular, students will be assessed on their knowledge of the theoretical references and contents of the tools presented, as well as their competence in reading and interpreting the protocol of a clinical case. In order to pass the exam, students must have obtained a minimum score of 18/30 in both modules. The final mark will be the average of the marks obtained in each module.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have sound knowledge of psycho-dynamic, cognitive development and emotional-relational theories, with particular emphasis on the 6 to 16 age range. In addition, students should have basic knowledge of psychometrics so as to be able to gather and interpret standardised scores.

Class attendance is not mandatory but strongly recommended.

In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.