# Psycho-Diagnostic Research Methods and Assessment Tools

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COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course, which is divided into two modules, aims to provide the basic knowledge and competences necessary to carry out evaluative and psychodiagnostic interventions in the various contexts in which the developmental psychologist is called to intervene.

Knowledge and understanding

At the end of the *first module*, students will be able to:

* understand the methods with which to build the test setting and fundamental relationship of trust in order to proceed with the *assessment;*
* know the neuropsychological theories and models that constitute the framework of the main assessment tools for the cognitive functioning profile: WISC-IV and V, BAS3 and NEPSY-II;
* know how to apply and score the tests that make up the instruments listed above;
* interpret the meaning of the psychometric indices obtained from the application of the tests, in light of the reference models of cognitive functioning.

At the end of the *second module*, students will be able to:

* understand the methods with which to construct a test setting in the expert field, including the similarities with and differences to the purely clinical context;
* know the Blacky Pictures Test, the methods of administration and interpretation;
* know the Rorschach test in its historical and current application;
* know the administration methods and have an overview of the most recognised scoring methods in the current scientific landscape (Exner and R-PAS Comprehensive System);
* use the necessary competences to draw up a psychodiagnostic report;
* know how to restore the functioning of the evaluated subject.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding

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

* create an appropriate setting and manage the relationship with the subject before and during the test;
* know, administer and interpret some of the main psychodiagnostic tests;
* elaborate a psychodiagnostic report and effectively report back on the characteristics that emerged, so as to outline the cognitive, relational and affective strengths and weaknesses.

COURSE CONTENT

The course will initially provide students with a basic knowledge of the general fundamentals of the psychological assessment based on text 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).

The course will then focus on providing theoretical and practical indications relating to the administration, scoring and evaluation of the tests in order to be able to draw up a profile relating to the clinical functioning of the subject undergoing psychodiagnostic evaluation.

Finally, the different ways of presenting clinical tools and giving feedback on the elements that emerge from the assessments will be presented; the course will therefore focus both on the most effective communication methods to relate to children and adolescents, as well as the most useful methods for interfacing with other professional figures variously involved in 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:

Module 1

Unit 1: The clinical evaluation

Meaning and objectives

The clinical evaluation construction process: creating the setting and the

relationship of trust

Test evaluation: different types of tests

Unit 2: Cognitive assessment

Definitions of intelligence

Cognitive Assessment and Theories: CHC Model, Lurijia Model, Boston Process Approach

Unit 3: The Wechsler scale for developmental age (WISC-IV and WISC-V)

History and description of the test

Administration

Interpretive reading

Cognitive functioning disorders: Intellectual Disability (ID), Borderline intellectual functioning (BIF), Non-Verbal Syndrome (NVS)

Unit 4: The BAS3

History and description of the test

Administration

Interpretive reading

Unit 5: The NEPSY-II

History and description of the test

Administration

Interpretive reading

Module 2

Unit 6: Test evaluation in the expert field

Introduction to the legal framework

Test evaluation process in the expert field: construction of the setting and choice of tests

Similarities and differences with the purely clinical context

Unit 7: The Blacky Pictures Test

History and description of the test

Administration

Interpretive reading

Unit 8: The Rorschach test

History and description of the test

Historical and current application

The Comprehensive Exner System and R-PAS

The tables and administration

Notes on signing, scoring and interpretation

Unit 9: Drafting of the psychodiagnostic report and feedback

Drafting the report on the clinical functioning of the evaluated subject

The psychodiagnostic relationship in the different areas: clinical, expert, school-related, etc.

The feedback interview

READING LIST

First module

Reading list for the path based on lecture contents:

Contents of the lectures (slides - notes)

Materials and articles provided and suggested in class

M. Lang, *I test che lo psicologo deve conoscere,* Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2020 (Chap. 1; total pages 30)

D. Traficante, M.A. Zanetti, *BAS3. British Ability Scales: descrizione dello strumento e applicazioni cliniche*. Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2023 (Part one; total pages 70)

Reading list for the text-based path:

M. Lang, *I test che lo psicologo deve conoscere,* Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2020 (Chap. 1; total pages 30)

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

D. Traficante, M.A. Zanetti, *BAS3. British Ability Scales: descrizione dello strumento e applicazioni cliniche*. Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2023 (pp. 220)

Second module

Reading list for the path based on lecture contents:

Contents of the lectures (slides - notes)

Materials and articles provided and suggested in class

L. Abbate, M. P. Andraos. *Scrivere la relazione psicodiagnostica*. Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2019 (pp tot. 250)

M. Lang, *I test che lo psicologo deve conoscere,* Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2020 (Stimulus Attribution test: introduction, Chaps. 10 and 11; total pages 59).

Reading list for the text-based path:

Slides, material and articles provided and suggested in class

L. Abbate, M. P. Andraos. *Scrivere la relazione psicodiagnostica*. Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2019 (total pages 250)

C. Barbarotto Moso-C. Nosengo-C.M. Xella, Le Blacky Pictures by G.S. Blum., Giunti O.S., Florence, 2010 (total pages 95).

M. Lang, *I test che lo psicologo deve conoscere,* Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan, 2020 (Stimulus Attribution test: introduction, Chaps. 10 and 11; total pages 59).

TEACHING METHOD

Lectures with examples of clinical cases.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

The exam comprises passing the tests required for each module.

First module

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, all students will be asked to comment on an assessment protocol deriving from the application of WISC-IV or BAS3, with an in-depth analysis of the psychometric and clinical significance of the scores attained.

Second module

a) 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.

b) With reference to the ability to apply knowledge and understanding, students who opt for the lecture-based path will be able to apply the tests learned in class, codify them and prepare a short paper that will be delivered to the lecturer within the times defined in class.

At the exam, students who opt for the text-only path, will be presented with some answers from Blacky's clinical cases and asked to proceed with the clinical analysis. The preparation for the Rorschach test will also be evaluated.

The overall assessment will consider completeness, relevance, correctness of student's 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. Each answer will be assigned an assessment from insufficient to excellent.

In order to pass the exam, students must have obtained a minimum assessment of 18/30 for both modules. The final mark will be the average of the marks obtained in each module.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

Students must have a good knowledge of psychodynamic theories and of the cognitive and affective-relational development of the individual, with particular reference to the age group from 6 to 20 years. They must also have acquired the basic psychometric knowledge to obtain and interpret standardised scores.

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.