Course Description and Objectives:

This course focuses on the assessment of cognitive and educational functioning, with special emphasis on intellectual evaluation. Other areas to receive focus include: attention, memory, language and academic achievement as each relates to cognition. Educational assessment will focus on estimating ability in reading, spelling, mathematics and written expression. The school-aged child and use of assessment within the school setting will be emphasized. By the end of the course, the student should have:

1. Technical expertise in administration, scoring and interpretation of at least two of the Wechsler intelligence scales as well as several other measures of cognitive functioning.
2. Technical expertise in administration, scoring and interpretation of at least two individually administered academic achievement instruments, and a knowledge of several additional alternatives.
3. Skills in effectively communicating the results of testing described in (1) and (2) in formal reports written for professionals, as well as oral and informal reports given to parents/significant others as well as teachers.
4. The psychometric expertise necessary to evaluate the technical merits and clinical appropriateness of cognitive tests.
5. An understanding of the history and contemporary theory surrounding the construct of intelligence as well as test development;
6. An appreciation of the diversity issues (e.g., ethnic, socio-economic, gender, developmental) that impact the use and interpretation of cognitive and educational tests.
7. Increased ethical sensitivity and behavior associated with conducting cognitive assessments.

While this course is intended to provide a foundational experience in individual, cognitive and educational assessment within a school context, developing mastery in this area will require continued practice and supervision after this course ends. Similar to taking a course in psychotherapy, one’s proficiency in assessment will increase with continued supervised practice, and should receive attention in future training sites, as well as continuing education and peer supervision opportunities.

Course Requirements:

1. Lecture and Lab. The course consists of conceptual (class lectures) and skill development (“lab”) components. Assigned reading is provided (see schedule) for each lecture and is to be completed prior to the corresponding class session. For approximately 1.5 hours per week, a test practice “lab” will provide “hands on” experience with many aspects of test
administration and scoring before students use volunteers to obtain additional practice and complete class assignments. It will often be necessary to use time outside of the lab sessions in order to achieve a minimum level of test administration proficiency. Class and lab attendance are required.

Testing Practice: “Lab Assignments.” Following each lecture session, a lab practicum will be held to assist students in the acquisition of accurate and proficient test administration skills. Useful test administration hints and suggestions will be provided, as well as discussions concerning lab assignments. In addition, to facilitate test mastery, many labs will have randomly chosen students demonstrate parts of previously assigned tests, with the remainder of the class critiquing the administration. Pass/fail lab performance (+1 or 0) grades will be given for each lab. Many of the labs will have written and skill demonstration assignments associated with them.

2. In conjunction with the course “lab,” each student will be required to complete written lab assignments. Late assignments will not be accepted unless there are significant extenuating circumstances (e.g., death in the family). Given the pace of the course, and the cumulative nature of the assignments, it is imperative that you stay current. The due dates are listed on the Course Schedule. Each of the submissions will earn a grade x. The test protocols you need to use for this course will be provided; there will be a charge for the costs of the xx manual ($xx if you want your own) and all protocols ($xx); make checks payable to “X University.”

3. Video submission. Each student is to submit a videotaping of a “real” administration of several of the following instruments receiving primary focus, including:XXX. Along with the tape should also be submitted a typed narrative about the tape indicating (by counter number): 1) two examples of things unintentionally done inaccurately or poorly (describe what was wrong and how each should have been done); 2) two examples of things done well, and would deserve to be used in a training film for illustrative purposes (again, be sure to document what the viewer should note was done well); and 3) a one or two paragraph description of what you learned about your “professional self” as a test administrator (i.e., did not know prior to) by watching this videotape of yourself testing a client. Use of self-monitoring test guidelines (found in the WAIS and WISC chapters of Sattler, or from Essentials Series) should prove very useful for those respective instruments.

Test Use: “The Rules”

a. Because of their expense and the need for test content protection, access to test kits is necessarily limited. Therefore it is imperative that we make the best use of the kits available. Each person/team will be assigned specified test kits for specified periods of time. Each person/team will be equally responsible for its test kits. If kits or parts of test kits are lost, the replacement costs will be equally shared among the members of that team. Each team will determine how to share the kits so that all work is completed individually and turned in on time, and the kit is returned when due.

b. At designated times during the semester the teams will return test kits. There will be a $10 per day late fee imposed for each day after the designated return date.
c. Many instruments will require a stopwatch to administer portions of the test. If you do not own a stopwatch (your watch’s stopwatch function will work fine), you will need to purchase one. Try to get one that clips to a clipboard and is free of a “beep” sound when activated. ix

d. To accumulate testing experience, you will need to obtain testing subjects. You may secure the necessary subjects from your training site, friends, etc. It is important to understand that the findings of your testing cannot be considered valid and so should not be used for any interpretive purpose. Under no circumstances should test results be shared with anyone other than those occasions associated with this course.

Course Evaluation Methods

Your final grade will consist of the following components:

- Class participation: required (points will be deducted for unexcused absences or non-participation in class)
  - Lab Assignments: 20% of final grade
  - Video submissions: 10% of final grade
  - Final Exam: 20% of final grade
  - Complete Psychology Report: 20% of final grade

END NOTES

i Q-interactive will allow easier access to these additional measures. All on the same platform.

ii Lots of scaffolding built into the Q-interactive system – will help in learning technical requirements. However, for the time being, instruction in paper and pencil and digital assessment is needed.

iii Right now, only WIAT-III is (almost) available on Q-i.

iv This is important in any assessment course, and even for those transitioning from paper and pencil to Q-i.

v Scaffolding will likely decrease time to learn.

vi Programs will need to determine the costs for the Q-interactive licenses for students and any other materials or “lab” fees. To start, there will need to be a balance between paper and digital, as both will need to be taught.

vii The scaffolding provided in Q-interactive will greatly minimize administration errors, but different types of checklists might need to be created.

viii Consider establishing an iPad loaner policy along with the test materials. Many programs have a loaner for the second iPad, and have students use a personal iPad for the clinician’s iPad.

ix No stopwatch needed with Q-interactive.