

Educational Psychology T5303

Introduction & Course Outline

Welcome! This course is designed to give you a practical basis for incorporating psychology into your teaching practice.

It aims to do this by giving you four aims:

- To give an overview of the realm in which psychology has an impact on educational theory.
- To give an overview of the impact psychology has on educational practices
- To understand that educational psychology is an evolving science with many intense debates.
- To be exposed to a basic terminology encountered in psychology focussing on education.

Course Assets

The library has the following book which is somewhat relevant McInerney & McInerney, (1998) *Educational Psychology: Constructing Learning*, Prentice Hall, Australia. There are a few other books available too. When I come across them I'll be sure to point them out.

Lecturers: Wednesdays	4.30-7.30 pm
Tutorials: Thursdays	4.30-6.30 pm

Web page: <http://t5303.oceanikpsi.org>. The web page will have links and resources to download including the course notes. If you need to get a print out and you do not have access to printing facilities yourself please contact the secretary, Sangita Kumar (see below).

Contact

Course lecturer Dr. Robin Taylor: robin@oceanikpsi.org - most reliable way to get me. Otherwise contact Sangita Kumar, kumar_sk@fit.ac.fj, or 337 2045 (338 7946 fax).

What is Educational Psychology?

Broadly speaking, it is the study of behaviour (that's the psychology part) in any educational context. It used to refer to the application of specialised interventions by psychologists who were trying to work with children that appeared to be falling behind. However, today's applications run far broader than that and can be relevant to things such as:

- good learning practices for most children;
- coping with diversity in the classroom;
- relevant assessments and their interpretations;
- dealing with gifted children;
- helping teachers understand their capabilities as teachers;
- helping administrators to understand their behaviour in an educational context;

and so on.

Why Should Teachers Learn About Educational Psychology?

If the answer is 'because it will help us to be better teachers by understanding the psychology in education' – that's correct but oh so trite. You need more meat on this argument to make it 'sell'. So for instance, I believe that amongst some of the measurable things you should be able to learn from the psychology of education, some would include:

- To learn how people learn.
- To learn about the different styles of learning.
- To understand what the term intelligence means (hint there's more than one meaning).
- To learn about what the measurements of intelligence, or understanding are actually measuring (hint measurements do not always measure the same thing).
- What forms of disciplining children work – and why.
- What does it mean to be 'abnormal' and how do we cope with abnormality in the classroom (this includes those with challenges and those who are gifted).
- To understand the meaning of the 'nature-nurture' complex (hint, it's so 20th century to consider this a debate anymore!).

There are other areas to consider, but these will be the ones that we will touch on during this course. If you're able to utilise the information to help make informed decisions about what, when, where and why you're constructing or delivering your lessons to your students – then the course has succeeded.

If instead you learn lots of 'facts', can recite theories and even state a few psychologists names but never utilise the information to help you in your teaching practice – then the course has failed. By the end of this course you should in fact be able to state that such a course would have had little construct validity but probably would have had superficial validity.

As such this course aims to give you a few concrete facts that you're able to utilise and that you're most likely to encounter in your teaching career; rather than try ambitiously to turn you into experts in educational psychology. There are postgraduate degrees for the latter.

Assessment

Assignment 1	10%	due at the end of week 6
Assignment 2	15%	due at the end of week 8
Assignment 3	25%	due at the end of week 11
Exam	50%	week 12

Assessments are 'criterion' or 'performance' based. That means that the assessments are structured with (hopefully) clear information about what is expected of you to get (i) a pass, or even (ii) a pass with merit or distinction; and also what a fail would look like. There should be enough information there for you to be able to assess yourself. Each assignment will contain specific detail to the assignment.

The overall pass mark is 50%, but you will need to achieve a minimum of 40% for the three assignments as a weighted average, and a minimum of 40% for the examination component. The assignments have been 'weighted' so that you can most 'afford' to make mistakes (and learn from them) in the first assignment. You'll be penalised most heavily for making a mistake in the third assignment and/or in the exam.

Good luck in completing this Course

