Introduction to Educational Psychology
Department of Psychology
The University of Hong Kong

First Semester, 2025-2026

Course Number   : PSYC7318
Lecture Hours   : Tuesday 3:00 p.m. to 5:50 p.m.
Lecture Hall   : CPD-G.01

Instructor   : Prof. Kathy Shum
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  Consultation Hours : Monday 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. or by appointment

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  Consultation Hours : By appointment

Course Description

This course explores the application of psychological theories to learning, teaching, and human development. Topics include major developmental theories and their relevance to education, learning theories from behavioral and cognitive traditions, effective teaching methods and practices, individual and group differences among learners, achievement motivation, and assessment strategies. Students will participate in learning activities that foster self-reflection and the integration of their daily life experiences.

Throughout the course, students will engage in activities that promote critical self-reflection and the application of their personal experiences to educational contexts. They will be encouraged to examine their own learning journeys and the education system in Hong Kong through the lens of the knowledge gained. Additionally, students are expected to actively explore the practical implications and applications of psychological theories within the field of education.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand major developmental theories and their applications to education.
- Appreciate individual and group differences among learners and apply strategies to accommodate diverse needs.
- Comprehend key learning and motivational theories, including their research findings, and their practical applications in teaching and personal learning.
- Demonstrate awareness of effective teaching practices and critically evaluate educational methods using this knowledge.
- Understand theories, practices, and research related to the evaluation of student performance.
- Reflect on personal learning experiences and explore how psychological theories can be practically applied in teaching and learning.
- Collaborate with classmates to conduct an authentic teaching session, applying course concepts and reflecting on the experience.

Course Schedule

Part I: Overview

| Week 1 | Sep 2 | Educational Psychology's Purposes and Methods |

Part II: Development and Students

Week 2	Sep 9	Theories of Development
Week 3	Sep 16	Student Diversity
Week 4	Sep 23	Exceptional Learners

Part III: Learning and Motivation

Week 5	Sep 30	Behavioral and Social Views of Learning
	Oct 7	*No Class (Day after Mid-Autumn Festival)*
	Oct 14	*Reading Week*
Week 6	Oct 21	**Quiz 1**
Week 7	Oct 28	Cognitive Theories of Learning
Week 8	Nov 4	Motivation

Part IV: Teaching Methods and Practices

Week 9	Nov 11	Direct Instruction
Week 10	Nov 18	Constructivist Approaches to Instruction
Week 11	Nov 25	Instruction to Meet Individual Needs
Week 12	Dec 2	**Quiz 2**

Required Textbook

Slavin, R. (2021). *Educational psychology: Theory and practice. (13th ed.)*. Pearson.

Recommended Reference Books

Irby, B. J., Brown, G., Lara-Alecio, R., & Jackson, S. (2013). *The handbook of educational theories*. Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publication

Course Assignments

Assessment is entirely based on coursework, which consists of four components:
1) Attendance and contribution to class learning   15%
2) Individual project   25%
3) Teaching practicum and report   35%
4) Class quizzes   25%

1) ***Attendance and Participation in Class Discussion (15%)***
Your attendance and participation reflect your commitment to the course. You are encouraged to share your ideas, questions, and personal experiences with the class. The benefits you gain from this course are closely linked to the effort you invest. Your contributions to class learning include supporting your fellow students and actively participating in discussions during lectures. Before each class, please read the assigned materials and thoughtfully consider the topic for that week.

2) ***Individual Project (25%)***
You may choose from Option A, B, C, or D for your individual project. If none of these options interest you, you can propose Option E. However, please discuss this with your tutor before proceeding. Quality is more important than quantity. Kindly limit the length of your essay/proposal/report to a **maximum of 2,500 words (approximately 8-9 pages with double-line spacing)**. You are encouraged to seek advice from your tutor regarding your individual project. The submission deadline is **Oct 28 (Tuesday)**. You should submit an e-copy of your project through Moodle to your tutor by **11:59 p.m. on that day**. Late submission is subject to deduction of marks.

Option A: Research project proposal
Choose a phenomenon in educational psychology that intrigues you and formulate a research question related to it. Your proposal should include:
- Your research question (***what*** is it?)
- The background (***why*** is it significant?)
- Method (***how*** would you go about answering the question?)

If you are taking the dissertation course this year, you are encouraged to select other options. If you wish to write a research project proposal, you must first discuss it with your tutor. The topic must be substantially different from your thesis topic.

Option B: Research critique
Review 3-4 journal articles on an issue of educational psychology (e.g., Are boys and girls treated differently in the classroom? Is cooperative learning effective? Are learning goals truly better than performance goals? Do small class sizes improve student learning? Does inclusive education benefit students with special needs? Does reward diminish motivation? Can competition facilitate learning?). These articles must be reports of empirical studies. Evaluate the validity of these studies and discuss how their findings can be integrated to address the questions.

Option C: Mentoring project
Find a mentee for this project. Throughout the semester, build a relationship with this student and assist him/her to make improvement in one of the following areas:
- Learning strategies
- Motivation
- Social and emotional development

You should have at least four interactions or contacts (which can be face-to-face or online) with your mentee during the semester. Aim to distribute these meetings evenly across the term. Cramming all four meetings into the last two weeks before submitting your report will reflect poorly on your effort. Write a report to evaluate the results of your intervention. Your approach should be grounded in your knowledge of development, learning, and instruction. You may discuss any difficulties encountered, strategies employed, and the overall effectiveness of your intervention, among other aspects. If you are a private tutor, work with children other than your tutees. Do not work with family members or relatives. You should obtain parental consent before you proceed (a sample parental consent form is posted on the course webpage).

Option D: Educational issue
Identify an educational issue in Hong Kong or your home country and analyze it from the perspective of an educational psychologist. You should apply the psychological theories you have learned to analyze the issue. Sociological or political perspectives are not appropriate for this assignment. Here are some examples of educational issues (the list is not exhaustive):

- Addiction to internet among students
- Alternative education
- Building resilience in students
- Career education and future readiness
- Cram school culture
- Curriculum reform
- Drug or substance abuse
- Homeschooling
- Home-school collaboration
- Inclusive education
- Integration of ethnic minority students
- Mental health and well-being of teachers and students
- National education
- Parent education
- Portfolio assessment
- Poverty and education
- Preschool education
- Project-based learning
- Reforms in the senior secondary curriculum
- Remote learning and online education
- School violence and bullying
- Students with special educational needs
- Use of technology and AI in education
- Values education

3) ***Teaching Practicum (35%)***

Form groups of 3-4 members. Each group will collaborate as a teaching team during one of the lectures in the final weeks of the semester. Each teaching session should last approximately **50 minutes** and be related to topics covered in Weeks 9-11. The group's task is to teach these topics to their fellow students. To make the session more focused, you may select a specific theme within these topics. Here are some examples:

A. Direct Instruction
  - Good practices in direct instruction
  - Direct instruction and student diversity
  - Remedies for the limitations of direct instruction
  - The use of direct instruction in Hong Kong schools
B. Constructivist Approaches to Instruction
  - Comparing teacher-centered and student-centered approaches
  - Problem-based learning and its application in tertiary education in Hong Kong
  - Cooperative learning and its feasibility in local education
  - Project learning in Hong Kong secondary schools: challenges and solutions
C. Instruction to Meet Individual Needs
  - Student diversity in Hong Kong classrooms
  - Pros and cons of heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping
  - Teaching strategies for heterogeneous grouping
  - Different methods of between-class grouping in Hong Kong: merits and limitations

Aim to incorporate concepts learned from this course into your teaching practicum. Each group will submit a report that includes a lesson plan and an evaluation of their teaching. The report should be approximately **8-9 pages (about 2,500 words)**, excluding appendices. The suggested format is as follows:

A Topic
B. Instructional Objectives (What did you want your fellow students to achieve in this lesson?)
C. Learning Activities (What activities did you plan to help your fellow students meet the instructional objectives?)
D. Evaluation (Were the instructional objectives achieved? What would you change if you could redo the lesson?)
E. Appendices (PowerPoint files, teaching materials, worksheets, etc.)

Please inform your tutor of your lesson topic by **Sep 30 (Tuesday)**. Early consultation with your tutor for guidance and feedback is encouraged. The report is due on **<u>Dec 9 (Tuesday) by 11:59 p.m.</u>**

4) ***Class Quizzes (25%)***

There will be two in-class quizzes: one on **Oct 21 (Tuesday)** and another at the end of the semester on **Dec 2 (Tuesday)**. Both quizzes will consist of essay questions.

Policies

Academic Honesty
We cherish academic honesty. Any student who engages in any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating on exams, plagiarism, interfering with grading) will receive a grade of F in this course and will be reported to the Department/Faculty Office/University Disciplinary Committee for further disciplinary action. There will be no exceptions.

Plagiarism
Materials authored by others (whether published or unpublished) may only be used in your assignments with proper acknowledgement and referencing. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Additionally, submitting work previously submitted for another course without proper acknowledgement (self-plagiarism) is also forbidden. You are responsible both individually and collectively for your group's submissions. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please visit the webpage at http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism for clarification.

All written assignments must be submitted in soft copy. These will be checked for plagiarism against a database of articles, books, webpages, and essays submitted by students at HKU and other universities. No credit (i.e., zero marks) will be given for assignments containing plagiarized materials. Any confirmed cases of plagiarism will be reported to your faculty for possible disciplinary action.

Generative AI Usage
Use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and similar technologies, is permitted for tasks like refining assignments or checking grammar and style. However, AI tools must not be used to write entire drafts, paragraphs, or sentences of written assignments. Students are responsible for ensuring that AI-generated content complies with intellectual property laws, is accurate, free of misinformation, and ethically sound. To adhere to university policies on academic integrity, students must acknowledge any AI assistance by including the following statement at the end of their assignments:
- "*No content generated by AI tools has been used/presented as my work.*" OR
- "*I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s)/ChatGPT/POE] to brainstorm ideas/ generate materials for background research/ check grammar and writing style.*"

Deadlines for Assignments
All assignment deadlines are final. Conflicts may arise with multiple end-of-term deadlines, making it impossible to complete all work on time if you delay. To avoid last-minute stress, plan your schedule and work ahead. Late submissions will incur a penalty of **1% of the total course mark per day**. Assignments submitted **more than 10 days after the deadline will receive a score of zero**. A medical certificate is required for late submission due to sickness.

Provision of Feedback
Students can expect to receive feedback within 2-3 weeks after submitting written assignments and completing class quizzes. Individual feedback can be obtained through meetings with the course tutor. Weekly consultation hours are available for individual consultation.

Weekly Readings
(Optional readings are marked with asterisks)

<u>**Week 1**</u>   **Educational Psychology's Purposes and Methods**

Chapter 1: Educational psychology: A foundation for teaching

* Lam, S.-f. (2006). Educational psychology in Hong Kong. In S. R. Jimerson, T. D. Oakland, & P. T. Farrell (Eds.), *The Handbook of International School Psychology* (pp.147-157). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

* Lam, S.-f. (2014). The preparation of educational psychologists in Hong Kong. *International Journal of School and Educational Psychology, 2,* 179-184.

<u>**Week 2**</u>   **Theories of Development**

Chapter 2: Cognitive development

Chapter 3: Social, moral, and emotional development

<u>**Week 3**</u>   **Student Diversity**

Chapter 4: Student diversity

* Atkins, M. S., Cappella, E., Shernoff, E. S., Mehta, T. G., & Gustafson, E. L. (2017). Schooling and children's mental health: Realigning resources to reduce disparities and advance public health. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology, 13*(1), 123-147.

* Lam, S. F., Jimerson, S., Kikas, E., Cefai, C., Veiga, F. H., Nelson, B., ... & Farrell, P. (2012). Do girls and boys perceive themselves as equally engaged in school? The results of an international study from 12 countries. *Journal of School Psychology, 50*(1), 77-94.

<u>**Week 4**</u>   **Exceptional Learners**

Chapter 12: Learners with exceptionalities

Ho, F. C., & Lam, C. S. C. (2020). Special Education and Integrated Education in Hong Kong. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*.

* Westwood, P. (2021). Integration to inclusion in Hong Kong: Not an easy progression. *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education, 45*(2), 268-280.

<u>**Week 5**</u>   **Behavioral and Social Views of Learning**

Chapter 5: Behavioral and social theories of learning

* Bryant, L. C., Vincent, R. Shaqlaih, A., & Moss, G. (2013). Behaviorism and behavioral learning theory. In B. J. Irby, G. Brown, R. Lara-Alecio & S. Jackson (Eds.), *The handbook of educational theories* (pp. 91-104). Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publication

Week 6   **Quiz 1**   *Venue: CPD-G.01*

Week 7   **Cognitive Theories of Learning**

Chapter 6: Cognitive theories of learning

* Paciotti, K. (2013). Cognitivism: Ways of knowing. In B. J. Irby, G. Brown, R. Lara-Alecio & S. Jackson (Eds.), *The handbook of educational theories* (pp. 105-113). Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publication

Week 8   **Motivation**

Chapter 10: Motivating students to learn

* Pendergast, L. L., & Kaplan, A. (2015). Instructional context and student motivation, learning, and development: Commentary and implications for school psychologists. *School Psychology International, 36*(6), 638-647.

Week 9   **Direct Instruction**

Chapter 7: The direct instruction lesson

* Hammond, L. (2022). Attitudes toward Direct Instruction in Western Australian primary and secondary schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 112*, 103651.

Week 10   **Constructivist Approaches to Instruction**

Chapter 8: Student-centered and constructivist approaches to instruction

* Narayan, R., Rodriguez, C., Araujo, J., Shaqlaih, Al, & Moss, G. (2013). Constructivism: Constructivist learning theory. In B. J. Irby, G. Brown, R. Lara-Alecio & S. Jackson (Eds.), *The handbook of educational theories* (pp. 169-183). Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publication

* Tran, V. D. (2013). Theoretical perspectives underlying the application of cooperative learning in classrooms. *International Journal of Higher Education, 2*(4), 101-115.

* Wilder, S. (2015). Impact of problem-based learning on academic achievement in high school: A systematic review. *Educational Review, 67*(4), 414-435.

Week 11   **Instruction to Meet Individual Needs**

Chapter 9: Grouping, differentiation, and technology

* Belfi, B., Goos, M., De Fraine, B., & Van Damme, J. (2012). The effect of class composition by gender and ability on secondary school students' school well-being and academic self-concept: A literature review. *Educational Research Review, 7*(1), 62-74.

* Deunk, M. I., Smale-Jacobse, A. E., de Boer, H., Doolaard, S., & Bosker, R. J. (2018). Effective differentiation practices: A systematic review and meta-analysis of studies on the cognitive effects of differentiation practices in primary education. *Educational Research Review, 24*, 31-54.

* Subban, P. (2006). Differentiated instruction: A research basis. *International Education Journal, 7*(7), 935-947.

Week 12   **Quiz 2**   *Venue: TBC*