

COGNITION, LEARNING AND THE SOCIO - CULTURAL CONTEXT,

Maximum Marks: 100

External: 70

Internal: 30

Design of the Course

- Four theory units and two field-based practicum units.
- Practicum to go in tandem with the theory course so that field-based data forms the basis of reflection on the theory. Readings for each task in the practicum are also suggested to facilitate theory-praxis linkages. The practicum tasks are suggestive and not prescriptive. It is hoped that the teacher educators would frame tasks according to the units of study.
- Specific readings suggested for use in discussion groups enabling reflective reading of each text.

Rationale and Aim

This course is aimed towards helping student-teachers understand various theories about learning and cognition. This would lead student-teachers to construct an understanding of learning for their own selves which they would be able to use in the classroom. This, it is hoped would help the teacher become more of a supporter and a facilitator rather than an instructor.

Another pertinent aim is to enable the students to develop an understanding of the research methods employed to understand children in their multiple contexts. It is envisaged that the students should use some of these methods not only to hone their skills in the same but also in learning about reflection and analysis on the data gathered through these means. This implies strengthening linkages between theory and practice through various field-based assignments.

Specific Objectives

- To understand the process of thinking and learning in children through different theories and critical perspectives: principles of behaviourism, cognitive development, information processing, constructivist, socio-constructivist and crosscultural positions. To reflect on their relevance in the teaching-learning process.
- To understand that the essence of child-centred pedagogy is to be in tandem with the physical, socio-cultural, emotional and cognitive worlds of children within the Indian context.
- To allow for opportunities such that the student teacher is able to visualize the linkages with theory in the real life interactions with children, through activities such as play, art, storytelling etc. as implications along with the units on physical motor development, cognition and language development respectively.

UNITS OF STUDY

UNIT 1: Learning and Cognition

- Learning: concept of learning: basic ideas of Behaviourism and its critique.
- Constructivism: Introduction to the concept
- Piaget's theory: Stages and processes of cognitive development, cognitive conflict characteristics of thought in different stages: children's thinking: implications for teaching-learning.
- Vygotsky's theory: Introduction, concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), tools and symbols in development, implications for teaching.
- Individual and socio-cultural differences in cognition: understanding learning difficulties, terms of exclusion and inclusion and impact.

UNIT 2: Play

- Meaning of Play, characteristics, kinds and types of Play
- Functions of play: linkages with the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language and motor development of children.
- Cross-cultural and socio-economic differences in children's play.
- Games and group dynamics, rules of games and how children learn to negotiate differences and resolve conflicts.

UNIT 3: Language and Communication

- Meaning and functions of language.
- Perspectives in language development (with special reference to how children acquire language at early age): social learning theory of Bandura.
- The uses of language : interactions, conversations and listening.
- Socio-cultural variations in language: accents, differences in communication, linguistic variation.
- Bilingual children: implications for teachers - multilingual classrooms: story telling as a pedagogic tool

UNIT 4: Self and moral development

- A sense of self: self-concept, self-esteem.
- Moral development: perspective of Kohlberg: cultural variations in moral reasoning.

Mode of Transaction

- Classroom discussions for developing conceptual understanding.
- Close reading of text material/papers.
- Individual and group presentations of issues and concerns raised in assignment.
- Theoretical and practical activities/exercises/investigations, analysis and interpretation of collated observations.

Essential Readings

1. Papalia, D. E. et. al. (2008) *Human Development*. McGraw Hill Higher Education: New York Chapters 5, 7, 9: sections on cognitive development.
2. Crain, W. (1992) *Theories of Development: Concepts and Applications*. (3rd Edition). Prentice Hall: New Jersey. Chapter 7: Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development. Chapter 8: Learning Theory: Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner. Chapter 9: Bandura's Social Learning Theory
3. Snowman, B. R. and J. Snowman (1996) *Psychology Applied to Teaching*. Houghton Mifflin: Boston. 8th edition. Chapter 8: Information Processing Theories. Chapter 9: Constructivist Learning Theory.
4. Vygotsky, L. S. (1997) Interaction between Learning and Development in Gauvian, M. and M. Cole. (ed.) *Readings on the Development of Children* W. H. Freeman: New York.
5. Piaget J. (1997) Development and Learning. In Gauvian, M. and M. Cole. (ed.) *Readings on the Development of Children*. W. H. Freeman: New York.
6. Harris, M. and Butterworth, G. (2002). *Developmental Psychology: a student's handbook*. Taylor & Francis: New York. Chapter 7: The beginnings of Language Development
7. Lefrancois, G. (1991) *Psychology for Teaching*. Wadsworth Publishing Co: California. Chapter 1: Psychology for teaching. Chapter 5: Thinking and remembering. Chapter 8: Intelligence and creativity.
8. Mukunda, Kamala, V. (2009) *What Did You Ask at School Today? A Handbook on Child Learning*. Harper Collins: Noida. Chapter 2: Learning, 22-50; Chapter 6: Moral Development, pp 117-146.

Readings for Discussion

1. Bodrova, E. and D. Leong (1996) *Tools of the Mind*. Merrill: New Jersey. Chapter 1: Introduction to the Vygotskian Approach. Chapter 2: Acquiring Mental Tools and Higher Mental Functions. Chapter 3: The Vygotskian Framework and Other Theories of Development and Learning, Chapter 4: The Zone of Proximal Development.
2. Donaldson, M. (1986) *Children's Minds*. Harper Collins Publishers Ltd: UK. Chapter 1: The School Experience. Chapter 2: The Ability to Decentre.
3. Gilligan, Carol (1977) In a Different Voice: Women's Conception of Self and Morality. *Harvard Educational Review*. 47 (4). 481-517.
4. Holt, John (1967) *How Children Learn*. Penguin: London..
5. Siegler, R. and M. W. Alibali (2005) *Children's Thinking*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey. 4th edition. . Chapter 1: An introduction to children's thinking. Chapter 3: Information-processing theories of development. Chapter 5: Sociocultural theories of development. Chapter 9: The development of social cognition.

Advanced Readings

1. Gardner, Harvard (1985) *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Paladin Books: London.
2. Piaget, Jean (1926) *Psychology of Intelligence*. Basic Books: New York.
3. Pollard, A. and A. Flier (1996). *The Social World of Children's Learning*. Cassell: London.
4. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. : Harvard University Press: Massachusetts. Chapter 1: Tool and Symbol in Child Development. Chapter 6: Interaction between Learning and Development. Chapter 7: The Role of Play in Development
5. Wood, David. (1988) *How Children Think and Learn*. Blackwell: Oxford. Introduction
6. Elkind, David (1976) *Child Development and Education*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Practicum: Peep into the Child's world: What and How II

Task 1: The student-teachers ask four children in the age group 4-7 years to draw on different themes they choose. The children are then encouraged to talk about their drawing. The students try and understand what the drawing communicates by talking to the child and looking for aspects of symbolic thought as expressed in the drawing. Also, the student-teacher arrives at the patterns that emerge across the various drawings that children have made. Student-teachers could also organize other such simple activities for children. They conduct these activities with children and maintain records of children's responses.

Task 2: The student-teacher does observation of children at play and maintain records. observation can be carried out in playgrounds in the neighborhood schools. The students could identify different games that children play: Individual and group behaviour in play: friendships and social relationships. The analysis could include the following aspects: motor skills, language used during play, group structure and interactions, arriving at rules and following them, gender behaviour, patterns of negotiation and resolving conflict. This assignment is to be followed by post-assignment discussions during contact hours to arrive at the linkages between play and social, emotional, cognitive, language and motor development of children.

References

1. Bettelheim, B. (1987). The Importance of Play. *The Atlantic Monthly*, March.
2. Bodrova, E. and Deborah J. Leong (1996). *Tools of the Mind*. New Jersey: Merrill Chapter 3: The Vygotskian Framework and other Theories of Child Development. Chapter 10: Play as a leading activity.

3. Cox M. (2005). *The Pictorial World of the Child*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
4. Erikson, Eric. H. (1972). *Play and Development*. New York: W.W. Norton.
5. Garvey, C. (1990). *Play*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
6. Sahi, J. and Sahi, R. (2009). *Learning Through Art*. Eklavya. Chapter 1: Introduction.
7. Vygotsky, Lev. S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 7: Role of Play.