BRINGING EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY TO UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY: NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND COURSE

DEVELOPMENT

by

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HONORS THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Educational psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on the use of psychological methods to understand education. At Texas State University, we do not offer a formal introductory educational psychology undergraduate course. However, a number of faculty have degrees in this field and could teach such a class. This thesis introduces educational psychology to the Honors College by proposing an introductory undergraduate course designed to help students learn about the widely applicable knowledge base of this prevalent and growing field. In order to determine the need for this course, I conducted a needs assessment survey with a total of 131 students who self-identified as Honors' students and/or psychology majors or minors. This survey investigated students' interest in and familiarity with multiple branches of psychology using a Likert scale. The survey also included a course description of the proposed introductory educational psychology course and a question asking about students' interest in enrolling in the course if it counted (e.g. as an elective) under their degree plan. Results suggested that students were less familiar with educational psychology, as well as other discipline-specific branches of psychology, compared to discipline-general branches of psychology. Moreover, bivariate correlation results yielded a statistically significant positive correlation between students' familiarity with educational psychology as a discipline and their interest in taking the proposed introductory educational psychology course. Over 54% of respondents indicated that they were either fairly (26%) or very (28.2%) interested in taking the proposed course. These results provided evidence suggesting the potential need for offering undergraduate students at Texas State

University the opportunity to become more familiar with and take courses in educational psychology. In addition to conducting a needs assessment, I also included in my thesis an Honors College Course Proposal Form for the creation of an undergraduate introductory educational psychology course. This form includes an outline of the course calendar, supplemental articles, and assignments that faculty could use as a foundation for creating the course. An Honors course in educational psychology will introduce students to viable careers, research approaches, and a vast knowledge base in educational psychology that is likely relevant to students on academic, professional, and personal levels.

I. INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

At Texas State University, there are no traditional undergraduate psychology courses offered in educational psychology. There are similar courses offered, like PSY 4342: Learning & Memory in the Department of Psychology and EDP 1350: Effective Learning and EDP 2150: Strategic Learning in the College of Education, yet there is not a class that introduces the field of educational psychology and its impact (Texas State University, 2020). After searching the Honors College database of previous courses offered and using their filter options of "psychology" and "education", there has only been a total of three psychology courses and three education courses offered through the Honors College (Texas State University, 2020). None of the Honors courses offered were related to educational psychology. This database search serves as evidence that Texas State University has not offered a traditional educational psychology course through any of their undergraduate programs.

The purpose of this thesis project is to examine the need to implement a course in educational psychology through the Honors College at Texas State University. This project is broken up into three parts: the literature review, the needs assessment, and the course proposal. The literature review contains information about the history and application of educational psychology. The survey is meant to identify how familiar and interested students are with the field of educational psychology compared to other major fields of psychology. Its purpose is to provide quantitative data to examine the need for the course. Because of the lack of exposure to educational psychology, I hypothesized that undergraduate students would recognize educational psychology less than other fields of psychology. I also hypothesized that they would be less interested in the field, probably because of their lack of understanding of what the field entails. These

hypotheses were investigated by examining trends in the descriptive data. Finally, I hypothesized statistically significant positive correlations between students' familiarity with educational psychology and their level of intertest in this field and in taking an introductory educational psychology course. In other words, I expected that students who were more familiar with educational psychology would also be more interested in it. These hypotheses were examined using bivariate correlation analysis.

Finally, I propose an introductory course in educational psychology and discuss my process of its development. The course proposal includes an outline of the course calendar and articles to supplement the course learning objectives. Students who are unfamiliar with this specialization may benefit from this course because it would provide an introduction to the unique field of educational psychology. This course could also put them at advantage if they plan to apply to graduate programs in higher education or educational psychology, if they intend to return to academia, or if they want to benefit their own personal agendas to succeed in an educational pursuit.

Literature Review

In this section, I have addressed the following: what the field of educational psychology is; the history of educational psychology and its interdisciplinary origins; and the types of jobs that are available to those who study educational psychology. I will also be presenting the differences between educational psychology and school psychology, as they are often confused with one another.

Educational Psychology Defined

The American Psychological Association defines psychology as the study of the mind and behavior (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.). Common branches of psychology, as well as those used in my needs assessment, are behavioral neuroscience,

clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, counseling psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, experimental psychology, forensic psychology, health psychology, industrial-organizational psychology, personality and social psychology, school psychology, and sports psychology (Weiner, 2013). Those who decide to stay in the psychology field of study typically become specialized in one of these branches of psychology when pursuing their graduate degrees.

Educational psychology is a relatively newer branch of psychology, and it is a unique field compared to other divisions of psychology, because it takes an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary approach to define its theories, practices, and research (Alexander, 2018). Educational psychology has attracted scholars from philosophy, psychology, medicine, and mathematics. These scholars shared a common belief that education can be understood and improved by applying scientific investigations. Alexander (2018) phrased it best when she said, "What qualifies these individuals as members of the educational psychology community writ large is not that they hold a degree from an established educational psychology program, but that they share in the mission of psychologizing educational experiences" (p. 149). In other words, it is the concept of attempting to explain education through the lens of psychology.

Educational psychology studies how humans learn and develop in educational settings by applying psychological concepts and methods to all aspects of education (Weinstein, Way, & Acee, 2013). Researchers in this field are interested in understanding various aspects of learning and education across the life space, including the complexity in learning, diversity and inclusion, and social classroom interaction. They are also interested in researching cognitive functions and motivation in the student. Over time, education research and practice has become more integrated with psychology, with

educational psychology serving as the bridge. By amalgamating multiple areas within psychology and education, educational psychology has become a major contributor in preparing children and educators to succeed in a diverse environment.

History of Educational Psychology

Educational psychology has its roots grounded all the way back to early philosophy with Aristotle, Democritus, Quintilian, and Comenius (Weinstein et al., 2013). These philosophers began questioning the relationship between education, behavior, learning, and teaching. However, it was Juan Luis Vives' book, *De Tradendis Disciplinus* (*The Art of Teaching*), that became recognized as the first major book on educational psychology. In this book, he emphasized the importance of student-focused education that uses their personal interests and abilities.

In the late 18th and 19th century, four Europeans stood out as influencers in the field of educational psychology (Weinstein et al., 2013). Rousseau and Pestalozzi made significant contributions to our understanding of students, schools, subject matter, and instruction. Johann Herbart adopted Vives' implications that educational programs should be focused around the student's abilities and interests. Herbart is recognized as the developer of "logical progression" for teaching, which can be seen in theories used today. Friedrich Froebel began the movement of kindergarten by establishing the first public kindergarten in St. Louis, Missouri. Froebel believed that the purpose of kindergarten was to foster creativity and active learning.

Throughout its history, educational psychology has changed where its research and theories are focused while continuing to contribute to the science of learning and the science of instruction (Mayer, 2018). Mayer (2018) has defined three major shifts for the field of educational psychology. The first shift changed from the traditional focus of

behaviorism, such as rewards and punishments, to emphasizing the importance of cognitive functions in relation to learning. William James was one of the first to consider psychology as a science and teaching as an art (Weinstein et al., 2013). He also began the discussion on consciousness and its implications in cognition and metacognition. G. Stanley Hall, a student of William James, was the first to open an educational research lab in America, the first to offer fellowships for graduate students, and the first to create a graduate program in education. Needless to say, Hall and James could be considered the catalysts for the educational psychology movement in America as well as being advocates for the integration of cognition.

The second shift in educational psychology was from applying one general theory of learning to recognizing the need for specialized theories for different subject areas (Mayer, 2018). Specifically, research in educational psychology helped spread awareness that different fields of study required personalized theories of learning. These are also known as psychologies of subject matter. Solving arithmetic word problems, writing compositions, and comprehending printed passages are all examples of how psychology of subject matter has helped evolve research in learning and teaching (Mayer, 2004). The research produced from the psychology of subject matter has been a milestone in the representation of educational psychology, because it has helped explain the relationship between human learning and cognition.

The third shift of educational psychology was the change from learning theories to learning strategies (Mayer, 2018). Learning theories focused on learning behaviors and information processing models on how students memorize, learn, and organize relevant content. Although cognitive learning theories are important for effective learning, learning strategies incorporate motivation, metacognition, and emotion into the field of

educational psychology (Mayer, 2018; Weinstein & Acee, 2018). According to Weinstein and Acee (2018), strategic learners must have the skill, will, and self-regulation to be successful in their studies.

Along with its contributions to the sciences of learning and instruction, educational psychology is also known for contributing to the science of assessment (Mayer, 2018). The field of assessment may be recognized as the bridge between teaching and learning (William, 2013). This field has popularized the examination and measurement of different types of knowledge, learning processes, and learner characteristics (Mayer, 2018). Assessment is also meant to make judgements to assist learning, to distinguish between an individual's achievements, and to evaluate programs (Pellegrino, 2014).

Continuing along with the historical timeline of educational psychology, in the 20th century, educational psychology was finally recognized as its own distinct field with more researchers dedicated to finding relationships between learning and instruction (Weinstein et al., 2013). John Dewey was one of the first developers, and his work was influenced by the early European contributions and their interest in children and active learning. Edward Thorndike was a prominent researcher before he focused his work on education. Thorndike is often called "the father of modern-day educational psychology" because of his contributions to the field (Cherry, 2020). In 1903, he published his first educational psychology textbook (Weinstein et al., 2013). In 1910, he published an essay in the first *Journal of Educational Psychology* that discussed the role psychology should have in education (Thorndike, 1910). Thorndike believed that psychology could help education by making it more measurable and that this would cause changes in the responses of students. Then, between 1913 and 1914, he published a three-volume text on

educational psychology (Weinstein et al., 2013). Thorndike's contributions provided a written starting point to kickstart the modern-day theories in educational psychology.

Other prominent figures in the field of educational psychology are Erikson, Bandura, Piaget, and Vygotsky. Although these researchers have their origins and focus in other fields of psychology, educational psychologists use their developmental and learning theories to help explain educational concepts. Erik Erikson was a developmental and psychoanalytic psychologist who focused on the social aspects of human development (Batra, 2013). He believed that as humans go through stages, they learn specific skills to enhance their ethics, identity, and social skills. These are important to education because it allows for educators to reflect on their class content and compare it to where their students are developmentally. Albert Bandura is a social cognitive psychologist who developed the social cognitive theory, which recognizes reciprocal interactions among the environment, the person, and the person's behavior and emphasizes both intra- and inter-individual processes involved in learning (Schunk, 2020). Social cognitive theory has had many implications in the field of educational psychology, especially in motivation, learning, and self-regulation.

Piaget was a cognitive psychologist who believed that children move through four stages of mental development (Zimmerman, 1982). Through these stages, Piaget focused on how children acquire knowledge and help explain intelligence. Although many of Piaget's theories are controversial and pose issues, some concepts are still referenced and used in educational psychology. Lev Vygotsky was known for his human development theory which emphasized the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Eun, 2019). The ZPD is the difference between what an individual can achieve without help and what an individual can achieve with help. This has been adopted into the field of educational

psychology as a tool to provide students with experiences that are in their ZPD to help develop their skills and strategies (McLeod, 2012).

In order to understand what educational psychology is, these shifts of theory, contributions to learning, instruction, and assessment, and major contributors are crucial because we are introduced to the important aspects and concepts of the field. These interdisciplinary theories provide insight that educational psychology is a field of study that is attractive to anyone who is interested in finding connections between psychology and education.

Specialization and Careers

In terms of education and post bachelor's degrees, people who are interested in entering the field of educational psychology should plan on receiving at least their master's degree in order to have more job opportunities (5 Careers for an Educational Psychology Graduate, n.d.). Potential careers with a master's degree are qualitative research technician, quantitative researcher, learning analyst, distance learning administrator, and applied research psychologist (What Careers are in Educational Psychology?, n.d.). Additional routes that can be taken within this field are developing school programs, working directly with students, teaching educators, and focusing on research. It is also common for educational psychologists to pursue a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. Along with the presented careers, individuals with a Ph.D. have the ability to be a professor of educational psychology. A degree in educational psychology is diverse enough to apply almost anywhere in the educational setting.

Educational Psychology vs. School Psychology

School psychology is a branch of psychology that is somewhat related to, but distinct from, educational psychology. School psychology and educational psychology

often get confused due to both being practiced in the educational setting. However, according to the American Psychological Association (APA), there are distinct differences between the fields. As mentioned before, educational psychology focuses on the research of human learning across the lifespan. Educational psychologists may work with people of various ages (although many focus their careers on specific age groups) and typically do not need additional licensure to practice. While school psychology also involves conducting research, there is also a clinical component. School Psychologists are trained to work with students from K-12 settings who have behavioral and learning issues, and they tend to have a stronger emphasis on assessment, consultation, and intervention with these students. In order to practice as a School Psychologist, a state-certified license is required.

A previous study distributed a survey through Qualtrics to universities and colleges using random selection to compare undergraduate students' knowledge about the school psychology field (Bocanegra, Gubi, Fan, Hansmann, 2015). In the end, they received data from 782 junior and senior undergraduate psychology students. The survey included an exposure scale, known as SKAPP, where students had to rate how much information they knew about different psychology fields using a 6-point Likert scale. They were also asked to complete a knowledge scale, KAAPP, to measure their previous knowledge of clinical, counseling, and school psychology on a 5-point scale.

The results of this study concluded that undergraduate psychology students had significantly less knowledge about school psychology in compared to counseling psychology and clinical psychology. This study is relevant to this thesis because, in the history of APA, the division of school psychology derived from educational psychology (Weinstein et al., 2013). This distinction provides support for my hypothesis that students

at Texas State University would be less familiar with educational psychology, just as the individuals in this study knew significantly less about school psychology.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

According to VandenBos (2007), a needs assessment involves "the identification of currently unmet service needs in a community or other group, done prior to implementing a new service program or modifying an existing service program." The needs assessment supplements my Honors Thesis project in designing a course in educational psychology. The purpose of this needs assessment is to survey undergraduate psychology and Honors students to determine their familiarity and interest across different fields of psychology. Students took an anonymous survey on Qualtrics that recorded no identifiable information. As mentioned earlier, Texas State University does not offer a traditional course in educational psychology. Because of this, I predicted that undergraduate students will be less familiar with educational psychology (a discipline-specific branch of psychology), relative to discipline-general branches of psychology emphasized in undergraduate psychology degree plans such as: personality and social, cognitive, behavioral, and developmental psychology. I also hypothesized that students' familiarity with educational psychology would correlate with their interest in educational psychology.

Following the results of the survey, I present a course proposal for a course in educational psychology through the Honors College. It was important to develop the course because the results provide justification that people may benefit from being introduced to educational psychology. The development of the course is meant to ignite the process of bringing educational psychology to Texas State University.

Participants

Participants included 131 undergraduate psychology majors, psychology minors, and Honors' students from various ages and racial backgrounds from Texas State

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University. A total of 183 students clicked the link to access the survey. However, only 135 people had complete data. Of these 135 students, four were not Honors students nor had a major or minor in psychology. This left a total of 131 participants with complete data. From these participants, 80.9% identified as female. The student's classifications ranged with juniors having the largest group at 36.6%. Following behind were the seniors at 26.7%, sophomores at 21.4%, freshmen at 13%, and 2.3% who classified as "other".

There were three different recruitment methods for this survey. Some respondents were recruited through psychology professors who distributed the survey to their students by email or by uploading it to the learning management system of TRACS. I also offered the opportunity to do an in-person recruitment to psychology and Honors classes. Finally, the Honors College included the survey in their monthly announcement email that was sent to all students of the Honors College. No identifiable data was collected to ensure anonymity.

Research Design

I was mostly interested to see how familiar and how much exposure students have to educational psychology in relation to other disciplines in the psychology field. The students were presented with a course description for educational psychology. Although this survey was not designed to predict the number of students who would be interested in enrolling in this course, the data provided will be used as justification for the development of the course.

Procedure

The survey was exempt from IRB approval on October 21st, 2019 and it was promptly distributed to students the following week. The IRB approval packet included a recruitment email announcement (see Appendix A) and an in-person recruitment

announcement (see Appendix B). In the email announcement, there was a hyperlink embedded so students have easy access to the survey. For the in-person recruitment, students were directed to the TRACS page of the class they were attending to find the email announcement. Students were easily able to complete this survey through Qualtrics, an anonymous survey system, through the use of their phones, tablets, and laptops.

Instruments

The questions on the survey were designed with the intent to get a better understanding on how familiar and interested students were with different fields of psychology. They were presented with 13 branches of psychology and, using a Likert scale, were asked how familiar they were, how interested they were, and if they had taken a course in those branches. To view the original questions, see appendix C.

The first block of the survey is a reminder that participation in the survey is voluntary, that they are welcomed to stop at any time, and that it only takes about five minutes to complete. They were also given the ability to skip a question if they prefer not to answer it. Question 1 was to identify if they were a student in the psychology department, as a psychology major or a psychology minor, or not. Question 2 was to distinguish if they were a member of the Honors College or not.

Questions 3, 4, and 5 used the following branches of psychology: behavioral neuroscience, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, counseling psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, experimental psychology, forensic psychology, health psychology, industrial-organizational psychology, personality and social psychology, school psychology, and sports psychology. These branches were chosen to be included in this survey because the Handbook of Psychology by Weiner

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(2013) included nine of these branches with their own individual volumes. I made the decision to include cognitive psychology, counseling psychology, school psychology, and sports psychology along with these nine branches. I included cognitive psychology and sports psychology because we offer both these courses at Texas State University. I included counseling psychology because pursuing a career as a therapist is a common occurrence for psychology majors. Then, I included school psychology because of the comparison made previously in the literature review section of this thesis.

Question 3 tested how familiar the student was with the presented branches of psychology by rating them on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Very familiar*) to 5 (*Not at all familiar*). Question 4 asked if they have ever taken a course on these branches. They had the option of "yes", "no", or "I do not know". The purpose of including "I do not know" is because they may not remember having taken the course, or the course might have been under a different name. Question 5 asked how interesting they found these branches by rating on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Very interesting*) to 5 (*Not at all interesting*).

Following these initial questions of familiarity and interest, they were presented with a course description on the proposed Honors course in educational psychology. The description is as follows:

"The purpose of this introductory course in Educational Psychology is to study and apply theories and research in everyday classroom learning. Content will highlight topics on learning, cognition, motivation, behavioral development, and social development. Classroom application will be used to better understand learners, recognize individual differences and personalize classroom learning."

Students were then asked if this course was available at Texas State University, and if it counted toward their degree plan, how interested would they be in enrolling in the class. They were given a Likert scare to rate from 1 (*Very interested*) to 5 (*Not interested at all*).

Finally, the students were given questions on basic demographic information. Question 7 asked for the student's gender. Question 8 asked for the student's classification. The following section goes into detail about the results from this survey and its implications for the development of the course in educational psychology.

Results

As previously mentioned, the final sample included a total of 131 undergraduate Texas State University students that were either psychology majors, minors, and/or members of the Honors College. Results from this survey were analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics processor, version 26.

I examined students' median level of familiarity with and interest in different branches of psychology to better understand how familiar and interested students were in educational psychology relative to other branches of psychology. I also investigated how interested students would be to take the educational psychology course that I designed. I then compared their levels of interest and familiarity in educational psychology to see if there was a correlation with their interest in the proposed course.

The purpose of this analysis was to see how the field of educational psychology compares to other fields. I predicted that the familiarity and interest of educational psychology would be lower compared to other branches of psychology because, as previously mentioned, there are no traditional educational psychology courses at Texas

State University. This data is meant to be useful to determine the need and interest to create an undergraduate course in educational psychology.

To examine descriptive differences in how familiar students were with educational psychology relative to other disciplines in psychology, I examined students' median scores for each discipline (see Table 1). The purpose of using the median results is to accurately portray the distribution of responses. The branches of psychology were organized from least familiar to most familiar.

The median for familiarity was 4 (*A little familiar*). The percentage of students that agreed with this was 29%, compared to 5 (*Not at all familiar*) with 21.4% and 3 (*Somewhat familiar*) with 26.0%. These high percentages suggest that students may be relatively less familiar with educational psychology and other discipline-specific fields of psychology like health, school, sports, and industrial-organizational psychology, compared to more discipline-general branches of psychology such as clinical, cognitive, personality and social psychology.

Table 1
Familiarity Median for Branches of Psychology

Branches of Psychology	Familiar Median
Industrial-Organizational Psychology	5.00
Sports Psychology	4.00
School Psychology	4.00
Health Psychology	4.00
Educational Psychology	**4.00**
Developmental Psychology	3.00
Experimental Psychology	3.00
Forensic Psychology	3.00
Counseling Psychology	3.00
Behavioral Neuroscience	3.00
Clinical Psychology	3.00
Cognitive Psychology	3.00
Personality and Social Psychology	2.00

Note. Higher scores indicate less familiarity and vice versa. $N=131$

I also examined the interest descriptive differences among the branches of psychology by comparing their median scores (see Table 2). The branches of psychology were organized from least interesting to most interesting. The median for interest of educational psychology was 3 (*Somewhat interesting*). The percentage of those who agreed with this was 30.5%. Compared to 13.7% who said 2 (*Fairly interesting*) and 22.9% who voted 1 (*Very interesting*). Although these percentages are high, they are not nearly as high when compared to the disciplines of psychology that have an interest median of 1 (*Very interesting*), such as developmental, cognitive, and personality and social psychology. Again, we recognize this pattern that more discipline-general areas of psychology are more popular than the discipline-specific fields of psychology.

Table 2
Interest Median for Branches of Psychology

Branches of Psychology	Interest Median
Industrial-Organizational Psychology	4.00
School Psychology	3.00
Sports Psychology	3.00
Educational Psychology	**3.00**
Health Psychology	2.00
Experimental Psychology	2.00
Forensic Psychology	2.00
Counseling Psychology	2.00
Behavioral Neuroscience	2.00
Clinical Psychology	2.00
Developmental Psychology	1.00
Cognitive Psychology	1.00
Personality and Social Psychology	1.00

Note. Higher scores indicate less interest and vice versa. *N*=131

The following table contains the frequency percentages of those who have taken a course for each of the branches of psychology (see Table 3). They had the options of "yes", "no", or "I don't know". These branches are ordered accurately based on that their percentages and rankings are in descending order from courses that they have taken the least to the most. Educational psychology had very high percentages (93.9%) for never

having taken a course in this field. This may be an implication as to why the familiarity

and interest in educational psychology are lower in comparison to the other fields of

psychology.

Table 3
Frequency of Course Taken by Branches of Psychology

Branches of Psychology	Taken %	Never Taken %	I don't know %
School Psychology	2.3%	96.9%	.8%
Industrial-Organizational Psychology	3.1%	94.7%	2.3%
Educational Psychology	**3.1%**	**93.9%**	**3.1%**
Counseling Psychology	6.1%	92.4%	1.5%
Sports Psychology	7.6%	91.6%	.8%
Health Psychology	6.9%	91.6%	.8%
Forensic Psychology	16.8%	82.4%	.8%
Clinical Psychology	13.0%	82.4%	4.6%
Experimental Psychology	26.0%	70.2%	3.8%
Cognitive Psychology	33.6%	60.3%	6.1%
Behavioral Neuroscience	38.2%	55.7%	6.1%
Personality and Social Psychology	52.7%	45.8%	1.5%
Developmental Psychology	53.4%	44.3%	2.3%

Note. N=131

The purpose of including a course description for educational psychology was to

see how many students would be interested in taking an introduction course for a field of

psychology that they may not be familiar with. Over 75% of the participants said they

were at least somewhat interested in taking the course. The following table describes the

frequency percentages for the Likert scale (see Table 4).

Table 4
Interest Taking the Proposed Course

Likert Scale	Interest %
Very interested	28.2%
Fairly interested	26.0%
Somewhat interested	22.9%
A little interested	13.0%
Not interested at all	9.9%

Note. N=131

In addition to the statistics of the individual questions from the survey, I also ran

correlation tests to see if there were any significant relationships between educational

psychology and the participants interests, familiarity, and their interest in the proposed course. After running a Pearson Correlation for the familiarity of educational psychology and the proposed course, we determined that there is a significant correlation between those who are familiar with educational psychology and those who are interested in the proposed course, $r(131) = .469$, $p < .000$. I also ran a Pearson Correlation to compare the relationship between interest in educational psychology and the proposed course. We found that there is a statistically significant relationship between those who are interested in educational psychology and those who are interested in the proposed course, $r(131) = .232$, $p < .008$. This analysis supports the hypothesis that those who are more familiar and interested in educational psychology would be more interested in the proposed course in educational psychology.

Discussion

According to the results, interest and familiarity of educational psychology is not as high as other, more discipline-general, branches of psychology. Along with these results, we should also compare them to the results of those who have taken a course in educational psychology. We note that not many people have taken a course in educational psychology. Since this survey was conducted at Texas State University, where there is not a traditional undergraduate course in educational psychology, it seems appropriate to make the assumption that this contributes to the results of the survey. Although not causal, these results provide descriptive support that not having taken a course or having the option to take a course in education psychology is associated with lower familiarity and interest in the field.

However, we should look beyond these initial results. 77% of students were at least somewhat interested in taking the proposed course. This data provides reasonable

justification for the creation of the course in educational psychology. Researchers may also use these results to examine interest and familiarity in different fields of psychology and career development for undergraduate students. In terms of the university, the overall results can provide data to the Psychology Department and the Honors College about where Texas State can enhance their current programs. This may spark conversation about how to provide resources and learning opportunities for these smaller, less sought-after branches of psychology. If this course were to be added to Texas State University, I would predict that we would see a change in the familiarity and interest ratings. This is not a prediction that students will become experts on this field of psychology, they would just have more exposure to educational psychology overall and it may change the student response such as that they indicate greater familiarity and, hopefully, more interest in educational psychology.

Although I wish I could say that this survey is sufficient evidence to justify the need for a course in educational psychology, that is simply not the case. It felt appropriate to discuss some of the limitations of this survey. The demographics of the survey could have been more diverse to also include students from the College of Education. Also, there were over twice as many people who identified as female who completed the survey; there should be more inclusion in terms of gender. There should also be a more equal distribution in terms of classification. Finally, needs assessments often aim to assess needs from multiple perspectives, and my survey only examined psychology majors, minors, and Honors College students. In order to design a more comprehensive needs assessment, including more stakeholders from the university would be beneficial. This might include faculty, administrators, academic advisors, career counselors, and possibly other groups of students. It would also be important to include varied methods,

such as interviews and focus groups that allow students to address their perceived needs more holistically in an open-ended format. Although beyond this score of this project, these recommendations would provide an immense amount of information about where there is a need for courses and what the students are interested in learning about and could be worthwhile in a future study.

Ultimately, these results help to establish a need to create an undergraduate course in educational psychology. The following section describes the proposed course. The development of this course along with the needs assessment is intended to spread awareness to students, faculty, and staff of those in the Honors College, College of Education, and Psychology Department to recognize the relevance and benefits provided by educational psychology.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF AN HONORS COURSE IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

I took the challenge to design a course in educational psychology, without ever having taken a course in the field or having any kind of knowledge about its application, because I personally felt like it was a course that I would have loved to have the opportunity to take. I have always been interested in education and psychology, yet, I had no clue there was an entire field of study dedicated to this research. After meeting Dr. Taylor Acee at a Graduate School Fair, I knew I wanted to design a course in educational psychology through the Honors College.

The Honors College at Texas State University is home to many diverse and quirky courses that people can only imagine. By proposing this course through the Honors College, students would not have to completely change their degree plans, making it feasible to enroll. Courses in the Honors College are also limited to 20 students, allowing for personable and discussion-based lectures. These courses allow for flexibility and unique learning opportunities. Considering the course content, it felt appropriate that a course in educational psychology would belong in the Honors College.

I strategically recruited an education faculty member and a psychology faculty member for my committee to provide feedback on the overall project and the course specifically. When designing this course, I reflected on previous Honors courses that I have taken and structured the assignments to be similar, yet unique, to this course content. Unofficially, I received feedback from friends and students in the Honors College about what they enjoyed of their courses as well. The most favorable attributes of Honors College courses, besides the class size, is the flexibility and diversity of assignments and assessments. Honors' students felt they had autonomy over their courses

if they were provided with multiple opportunities of succeeding in the class. Such as, group discussions, combinations of tests and papers, and guest lecturers. Taking these opinions into consideration, this course is meant to be structured to the liking and success of the student.

In order to develop this course, I used the Honors College Course Proposal Form, found on the Honors College website (see Appendix D). This proposal form is for educators to submit the proposed course title, description, and justification. It also requires submitting student outcomes, instructional methodologies, assessment of student learning, course outline, and suggested textbooks and other learning resources. Seeing the work that was ahead of me was overwhelming, however, the challenge was exhilarating.

I began by searching for educational psychology courses and their syllabi at other universities across the nation. I also had the help of a couple educational psychology textbooks: *Learning Theories: An Educational Perspective* by Dale Schunk and *Educational Psychology* by Anita Woolfolk Hoy (Schunk, 2012; Hoy, 2005). During this search, I had to become familiar with the content of the field to successfully create a course that reflects the rigorous structure of an Honors course and the appropriate material of an introduction to educational psychology course. Through the process of writing the literature review and finding syllabi, I was introduced to major themes, theories, research, and researchers in educational psychology. I also frequently consulted with my committee about what content to include and how to organize it. This section describes the course outline and the assessment of student learning for the proposed course in educational psychology.

Purpose, Scope, and Emphasis of the Course

The goal of the development of this course was not to go into depth into any one specific subject area. Instead, I wanted to allow students to be introduced to multiple core areas of the educational psychology field. I envisioned that advisors might recommend this course for students interested in the application of psychology to education. This may include students interested in careers or graduate studies in education, educational psychology, and the learning sciences; as well as those generally interested in improving their lifelong learning and teaching skills. It is not, however, limited to them. The foundation of the course is to encourage students from all different degree programs and aspiring careers to leave the semester with new, applicable knowledge that they can use themselves whether that be in their own current educational experience, or in their future educating experiences.

Course Outline

Students are assigned an article or chapter to be the center of discussion for each day of class. Since this course is being proposed through the Honors College, the reading material is meant to be challenging yet interesting. The purpose of this is to tie the assigned readings to current and relevant theories in the field of educational psychology. The reading material is also meant to encourage students to make their own connections and observations by applying the material in their own educational experiences and providing examples to the class as part of their open discussion and participation requirement.

The course content is designed so that the learning objective flows from week to week and the material adds onto previous lessons. The first half of the semester focuses on foundational theories that are relevant and practiced in educational psychology. It felt

appropriate that this course begin with some history on its interdisciplinary origins. That is why the first two weeks is dedicated to becoming familiar with the students enrolled, the history, and the paradigms in educational psychology. Due to its interdisciplinary beginning, some of the earlier content may appear similar to other courses already provided at the university. However, both my committee members agreed that the application was unique enough to educational psychology to include. They also mentioned that students may benefit from learning the same material in multiple classes.

Following this introduction, each week is designated to discuss a major paradigm. Week 3 starts the bulk of the content, and it focuses on the application of behaviorism, as presented by Thorndike. Erikson and Bandura make an appearance during Week 4 as students are introduced to social development theories and social cognitive theories. Week 5 presents and challenges Piaget's theory. Later that same week, we take a closer look at Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. Week 6 wraps up the first half of the course content with discussions on cognitive learning theories and metacognition. Week 7 includes a review of the course content in preparation for a mid-term followed by the mid-term later that week.

The second half of the course takes the foundational theories taught and uses them in more applied areas of educational psychology. During Week 8, students will be introduced to the teaching of subject matter and how to plan by using learning strategies. Week 9 focuses on terminology of motivation and its application through the social cognitive theory provided by Schunk. This far into the semester, we have mostly discussed intrinsic methods to ensure the students' academic success. However, we also need to recognize that the educator has to take into considering that sometimes it is the

environment or the area that the student is living and learning in that has to be corrected to help students succeed.

There are forces outside of the control of the student that are important to ensure that students have equal opportunities to learn. Week 10 covers the importance of having appropriate classroom management styles and how to provide supportive environments to build a community and a sense of belonging. During Week 11, we will discuss the importance of understanding individual differences in terms of culture, identity, talent, and disabilities. In terms of education, many forget or do not realize the role that families have to support their student. That is why Week 12 is dedicated to the involvement of family, specifically of those who are disenfranchised and underrepresented. Week 13 analyzes the significance of assessment systems and their contributions in education. Another priority I had when designing this course was envisioning a future for the field of educational psychology. Week 14 described the contributions of educational psychology to the science of learning, instruction, and assessment. It also refers back to Week 11 and discusses methods on enhancing educational psychology to be more representative of diversity. Finally, Week 15 wraps up the course by having an open discussion with the students about the course itself. Considering it is a course in educational psychology, it felt appropriate to reflect on the lessons taught. Students are encouraged to provide feedback to the instructor about aspects they enjoyed and what they were not as fond of. The purpose of this discussion is so that the instructor can accommodate the curriculum for future semesters.

Assessment of Student Learning

In order to provide students with significant opportunities and different methods to assess their learning, the grading for the class may seem slightly complicated. The final

grade of the course is compromised out of 500 total points for six major components. I decided to use the point system because it gives off the impression that students are being rewarded for their academic involvement, instead of being punished for not completing the assignments. In my experience, point systems reduce stress from students who are busy, distracted, or not doing as well as they would like in the course.

In terms of the actual assignments, students are required to participate in group discussions that counts towards 16% of their final grade. Since the course would be an Honors course, it implies that it will have about 20 students enrolled. This leaves opportunity for students to fully engage with the material and their classmates. Another aspect that will reflect the student's grade will be the requirement of the mid-term exam that covers material from the first half of the semester. This mid-term counts towards 20% of the final grade.

As previously mentioned, students will be assigned daily readings for each class day. However, students will only be required to submit one reading reflection a week on the reading assignment of their choice. Out of the 14 weeks of course content, they are only required to submit 12. Students will complete the assignments by answering the following questions: What is something new you learned, how can you apply this to your own educational experience, and how can you apply this in your future educating experience. Students are encouraged to write beyond these structured questions and to ask their own questions to the professor concerning the course content. The final week is a required assignment because it will be a reflection over the entire semester, asking the students about the most important or most applicable lessons they have learned and how they intend to apply these principles to their own academic experience. The flexibility of the weekly assignments is to allow students to engage in the material that most interests

them. It also allows for students to skip some weeks if they have other obligations to attend.

The largest portion of their grade, and perhaps the most complicated, comes from the observation assignment. This assignment is broken up into three parts: individual assignment (20%), group project (15%), and group presentation (5%). The individual assignment is a four- to five- page paper compromised of the student's observations in three courses they are not enrolled in. Students will receive verbal permission from a professor in STEM, Liberal Arts, and Creative Arts to sit in their class and observe them as they teach. The observations will cover some of the following topics learned from class: teaching subject matter, supportive environment, classroom management, learner differences, and assessment strategies. Students will be asked to write one-page for each course, then write about one- to two pages to compare their observations across the courses. Students should also ask for a copy of the syllabus to use for their paper.

The second part of this assignment is the group project. As an Honors course, it felt important to incorporate group work. This assignment will be a two- page paper between groups of three to four students where they will combine their observational research to find commonalities across the different fields of study. Finally, they will be required to present their research to the class during the designated final exam time of the 16th Week of class. Again, as an Honors course, it felt appropriate to encourage students to practice their public speaking skills. With this large project, students are able to apply their knowledge from the class, yet, they are given the flexibility to be creative.

IV. CONCLUSION

Educational psychology is an interdisciplinary branch of psychology with goals of contributing their research and theories to enhance and understand motivation, cognition, and development in the educational classrooms. Even before its official declaration in APA in 1946, educational psychology has contributed to the science of learning, instruction, and assessment as psychologists use their developmental and learning theories to help explain educational concepts (Weinstein et al., 2013; Mayer, 2018).

Because of the importance this branch of psychology has to the field of education, I presented a needs assessment to determine how beneficial it would be to bring a course in educational psychology to Texas State University. The survey was distributed to undergraduate psychology majors, psychology minors, and/or students of the Honors College. The end results yielded 131 participants. The survey contained Likert scale questions asking the participants about their familiarity, interest, and if they have taken a course in 13 branches of psychology. They were also presented with a brief course description for the proposed course in educational psychology. Over 75% of the participants claimed that they were somewhat familiar with educational psychology while about 67% of participants said they were at least somewhat interested in educational psychology. We also see that over 93% of participants have never taken a course in educational psychology. Results for the proposed course yielded that about 77% of the participants were interested in taking the proposed course. From this data, we can see that the interest in educational psychology is prevalent, but the resources to learn about this field of psychology are not easily accessible.

Following the survey, I presented the process I took to build a course in educational psychology. After months of researching other introduction to educational

psychology courses and talking to people in the Honors College about what they enjoyed from their Honors courses, I was finally able to design the course. Using the Honors Course Proposal Form, I was able to provide detailed information about what this course will entail. Two of the largest parts of this proposal form were the outline and the assessment of student learning. The outline includes the learning objective per week, the topic of discussion per day, the assigned readings, and assignment due dates. The assessment of student learning explains the assignments that the students are to complete. The content and structure of this course is meant to be a challenge, as it would be an Honors College course; however, it is also meant to be engaging and interesting. When designing this course, I wanted to create a course that I would have enjoyed taking that is stimulating and flexible.

Among the need for development of a course in educational psychology, we would also need faculty interested in teaching courses in educational psychology. Although a survey of those who have a degree in educational psychology was beyond the scope of this thesis project, faculty have already expressed interest. Dr. Carlton Fong and Dr. Taylor Acee are two associate professors in the program of Developmental Education through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Fong and Dr. Acee have Ph.D degrees in Educational Psychology, and have expressed interest in putting their degrees to practice by teaching courses in educational psychology. Throughout the last year of working with Dr. Acee, the conversation about who would teach this course has come up. As of right now, the goal is for Dr. Acee to become involved with the Honors College by teaching this course, therefore bringing more awareness to the field of educational psychology.

Throughout this thesis, I have provided not just a need for a course in educational psychology but a blueprint to initiate this course through the Honors College. In the short-term, this thesis will educate Texas State University students and faculty about the importance and relevance of educational psychology as a field of psychology that lacks representation at our university. In the long-term, this thesis may be a catalyst for those who would like to provide justification for other subjects and courses that deserve more recognition. Overall, educational psychology will provide students with the appropriate skills to be actively aware and involved in their education.

Appendix A – IRB Exempt Form

Karla Reyes Fierros, an undergraduate student at Texas State University, is conducting a research study to obtain feedback from Psychology Majors and Minors and students in the Honors College at Texas State University about the type of courses they have taken or are interested in taking. You are being asked to complete this survey because you are a Psychology Major or Minor, or a student in the Honors College.

Participation is voluntary. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. You must be at least 18 years old to take this survey.

This study involves no foreseeable serious risks. We ask that you try to answer all questions; however, if there are any items that make you uncomfortable or that you would prefer to skip, please leave the answer blank. Your responses are anonymous. There are no direct benefits to the participant. However, it could help to inform future course offerings in the Psychology Department and/or Honors College.

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The members of the research team and the Texas State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.

Data will be kept for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is completed and then destroyed.

If you wish to participate in this research, please follow this link:
https://txstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bOcqgXF5aOv01O5

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact Karla Reyes Fierros or their faculty advisor:

Karla Reyes Fierros, undergraduate student	**Dr. Taylor Acee, Professor**
Department of Psychology	**Department of Curriculum and Instruction**
903-292-3465	**512-245-7903**
kmf106@texasstate.edu	**aceet@texasstate.edu**

This project 6823 was approved by the Texas State IRB on October 21, 2019. Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Denise Gobert 512-716-2652 – (dgobert@txstate.edu) or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2334 - (meg201@txstate.edu).

If you would prefer not to participate, please do not fill out a survey.

If you consent to participate, please complete the survey.

TEXAS STATE
Exempt Review
10/21/2019
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Appendix B – In-Person Recruitment Announcement

Study Title: Educational Psychology: Student Survey
Principal Investigator: Karla Reyes   **Co-Investigator/Faculty Advisor:** Dr.
Fierros   Taylor Acee
Sponsor: Not applicable

My name is Karla Reyes Fierros and I am an undergraduate student at Texas State University. I am doing this study because I am interested to see how familiar undergraduate students are with different fields of psychology. I am asking you to take part because most, if not all, of you are Psychology Majors or Minors, or in the Honors College. I am going to tell you a little bit about the study so you can decide if you want to be in it or not.

Participation of this survey is voluntary. You may stop at any time. If you prefer not to answer a survey item, you may skip it. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes.

If you are interested in completing this survey, you must access the survey link embedded in the email your professor has sent.

Do you have any questions?

Appendix C – Educational Psychology: Student Survey

First Block: Thank you for participating in this survey. Your participation is voluntary.

You may stop at any time. If you prefer not to answer a survey item, you may skip it.

This survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Q1: Are you a psychology major or minor?

- Psychology Major (1)
- Psychology Minor (2)
- Neither (3)

Q2: Are you in the Honors College?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q3: How familiar are you with the following branches of psychology: **[Likert Scale: Very familiar (1), Fairly familiar (2), Somewhat familiar (3), A little familiar (4), Not at all familiar (5)]**

- Behavioral Neuroscience (1)
- Clinical Psychology (2)
- Cognitive Psychology (3)
- Counseling Psychology (4)
- Developmental Psychology (5)
- Educational Psychology (6)
- Experimental Psychology (7)
- Forensic Psychology (8)
- Health Psychology (9)
- Industrial-Organizational Psychology (10)
- Personality and Social Psychology (11)
- School Psychology (12)
- Sports Psychology (13)

Q4: Have you ever taken a course on the following: **[Yes (1), No (2), I do not know (3)]**

- Behavioral Neuroscience (1)
- Clinical Psychology (2)
- Cognitive Psychology (3)
- Counseling Psychology (4)
- Developmental Psychology (5)
- Educational Psychology (6)
- Experimental Psychology (7)
- Forensic Psychology (8)
- Health Psychology (9)
- Industrial-Organizational Psychology (10)
- Personality and Social Psychology (11)
- School Psychology (12)
- Sports Psychology (13)

Q5: How interesting do you find the following: **[Very interesting (1), Fairly interesting (2), Somewhat interesting (3), A little interesting (4), Not at all interesting (5)]**

- Behavioral Neuroscience (1)
- Clinical Psychology (2)
- Cognitive Psychology (3)
- Counseling Psychology (4)
- Developmental Psychology (5)
- Educational Psychology (6)
- Experimental Psychology (7)
- Forensic Psychology (8)
- Health Psychology (9)
- Industrial-Organizational Psychology (10)
- Personality and Social Psychology (11)
- School Psychology (12)
- Sports Psychology (13)

Sixth Block:
Read the course description below and answer the following question:
Course description for Introduction to Educational Psychology: The purpose of this introductory course in Educational Psychology is to study and apply theories and research in everyday classroom learning. Content will highlight topics on learning, cognition, motivation, behavioral
Development, and social development. Classroom application will be used to better understand learners, recognize individual differences, and personalize classroom learning.

Q6: If a course in Educational Psychology was offered at Texas State, and it counted toward your degree, how interested would you be to take it?

- Very interested (1)
- Fairly interested (2)
- Somewhat interested (3)
- A little interested (4)
- Not interested at all (5)

Q7: Gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary (3)
- Prefer not to answer (4)

Q8: What is your student classification?

- Freshman (1)
- Sophomore (2)
- Junior (3)
- Senior (4)
- Other (please explain) (5)

Proposed Course Title –
Educational Psychology: An Introduction to Theories and Research in Everyday
Classroom Learning

50-word Course Description –
The purpose of this introductory course in Educational Psychology is to study and apply
theories and research in everyday classroom learning. Content will highlight topics on
learning, cognition, motivation, behavioral development, and social development.
Classroom application will be used to better understand learners, recognize individual
differences, and personalize classroom learning.

Course Justification –
In order to justify the need for this course, I conducted a needs assessment that studied
how familiar and interested students were with different fields of psychology. Despite
Texas State University and the Honors College offering many psychology courses, they
both lack courses in educational psychology - a field of psychology that had lower results
compared to other, more general, fields of psychology. A course in educational
psychology will teach students about theories and practices used in the educational
setting.

Measurable Student Outcomes –
A. Literature for the course was chosen to be interesting and beneficial to all types of
students. Considering educational psychology is an interdisciplinary field of psychology,
it felt appropriate to find articles and research that reflected this. Students are encouraged
to bring in their personal educational experiences and academics to apply and understand
them from an educational psychology perspective.
B. Students in this course are required to do daily readings to contribute to the class
discussion. Along with the daily readings, they are required to do a reflection once a
week about the readings. Reflections are a method used to ensure that the students are
doing the assigned readings and that they are applying the information. They are also
encouraged to ask questions, in the reflections or in class, to clarify content. In terms of
oral comprehension, students are expected to do a group presentation at the end of the
semester on their observation assignment.
C. Students are assigned an individual project and a group project to put their literature
and class discussions into practice. They have the flexibility to use any research, theories,
themes, and other applications presented throughout the semester to supplement their
project.

Brief Description of Instructional Methodologies –
This course will take on a seminar-style lecture. Each week, students will be required to
contribute to the group discussions and submit a weekly reading reflection paper.
Assignments for this course include: weekly reading reflections, a mid-term, an
individual field-based observation of three academic courses, and a final group project.

Assessment of Student Learning –

Group Discussion Participation (16%) =	80 points
Mid-Term Exam (20%) =	100 points
Weekly Assignments (10pts/12 weeks) (24%) = Final Week Required	120 points
Observation Assignment – Individual Project (20%) =	100 points
Observation Assignment – Group Project (15%) =	75 points
Observation Assignment – Group Presentation (5%) =	25 points

_____

Total =   500 points

Group Discussion Participation (16%)
This will count as attendance credit for the course. Students are encouraged to be actively participating in group discussions and be attentive in all classes. Student will not receive credit for the day if not physically present in class.

Mid-Term Exam (20%)
The exam will be left up to the decision of the professor.

Weekly Assignments (24%)
- One-page paper, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt
- In order to ensure that students are doing the assigned readings, they will be assigned these weekly reading reflection assignments.
- Only one reflection is due each week. If there are two assigned readings in one week, students will choose only one of the two options.
- Students are required to submit reflections 12 out of 14 weeks.
- The final week is a required reflection (counts as one of the 12). This reflection will be on the entire semester. They are required to write about the most important/applicable lessons they have learned and how they intend to apply these principles to their own academic experience.
- The content of the other weekly assignments will answer the following questions:
    o What is something new you learned?
    o How can you apply this to your own educational experience?
    o How can you apply this in your future educating experience?
- Students are also encouraged to write questions for clarification.

<u>**Observation Assignment**</u>
- **Individual Assignment (20%)**
  - Four– five- page paper, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt
  - Students will receive verbal permission from the professor to sit in their class and observe them. When collecting and writing about the data, students will use anonymous names. Students should ask for a copy of the syllabus to use for their paper.
  - Students will observe three types of courses (that they are not enrolled in):
    - STEM
    - Liberal Arts
    - Creative Arts
  - **Reflection:**
    - One-page discussion on each course
    - One- two- pages comparing the courses
    - Use the syllabi as a supplement and prediction of the rest of the semester.
  - **Observations:**
    - Teaching subject matter
    - Supportive environment
    - Classroom management
    - Accommodations for learner differences
    - (with syllabus) Assessment strategies
- **Group Project (15%)**
  - Two-page paper, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt
  - Students will form groups of three to four people and will bring their observation research together. They will find commonalities among their observations and will write up to a two-page paper with an introduction, three commonalities and examples, and a conclusion.
- **Group Presentation (5%)**
  - Students will present their research to the class during the designated final day/time.

<u>**Course Outline –**</u>
Hypothetically, classes will be on Monday and Wednesday.

Week	Topic(s)	Learning Objective(s)	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)

Week 1
Learning Objective: The class will understand the history of educational psychology and its interdisciplinary incorporations.
M: Syllabus and get to know the class. Open discussion about majors, career plans, the purpose in enrolling in this course, and hope to learn in the course.
Reading: N/A
W: Introduction and history of educational psychology.
Reading: Weinstein, C. E., Way, P. J., & Acee, T. W. (2013). Educational psychology. *Handbook of psychology.*

Week 2
Learning Objective: Students will become familiar with different philosophies, research methods, themes, and theories used in educational psychology.
M: Introduction to the main themes, prominent theories, and main contributors in educational psychology.
Reading: N/A
W: Research and theories in the field of educational psychology.
Reading: Johnson, A. P. (2014). Chapter 1: Philosophy, psychology research, and theories.

Week 3
Learning Objective: Students will study Thorndike's perspective and theories about educational psychology. They will also apply behaviorism research in a community college campus.
M: Thorndike's perspective on the contributions made to education from psychology.
Reading: Thorndike, E. L. (1910). The contribution of psychology to education.
W: Using behaviorism to assist community college students.
Reading: Miranda, M. V. (2009). Creating the successful community college student: Using behaviorism to foster constructivism.

Week 4
Learning Objective: Students will study social development theories presented by Erikson, and apply Bandura's social cognitive theories.
M: Erikson's psychosocial development theories and children's engagement in education.
Reading: Batra, S. (2013). The psychosocial development of children: Implications for education and society — Erik Erikson in context.
W: Bandura's social cognitive theory with an application in coaching, modeling, and observational learning.
Reading: Connolly, G. J. (2017). Applying social cognitive theory in coaching athletes: The power of positive role models.

Week 5
Learning Objective: Students will be introduced to constructivism through the human development theories and research of Piaget and Vygotsky.
M: Piaget's theory and educational frameworks, as well as challenging the theory.
Reading: Zimmerman, B. J. (1982). Piaget's theory and instruction: How compatible are they?
W: Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.
Reading: Eun, B. (2019). The zone of proximal development as an overarching concept: A framework for synthesizing Vygotsky's theories.

Week 6
Learning Objective: Students will be introduced to cognitive learning theories and processes that apply to learning and educational practices.
M: Information procession using cognitive learning theories.
Reading: Çeliköz, N., Erisen, Y., & Sahin, M. (2019). Cognitive learning theories with emphasis on latent learning, gestalt and information processing theories.

W: Metacognitive support through teachers' instructional practices.
Reading: Zepeda, C. D., Hlutkowsky, C. O., Partika, A. C., & Nokes-Malach, T. J. (2019). Identifying teachers' supports of metacognition through classroom talk and its relation to growth in conceptual learning.

Week 7
Learning Objective: Mid-Term
M: Review for Mid-Term
Reading: N/A
W: Mid-term Exam
Reading: N/A

Week 8
Learning Objective: Students will be challenged to learn about different methods on how to teach specific subject matters. They will then be asked to reflect on their own learning strategies throughout their daily college experiences and how it has changed over the years.
M: Teaching of subject matter: reading, writing, comprehending, math, and science.
Reading: Mayer, R. E. (2004). Teaching of subject matter.
W: How to self-regulate and plan by using learning strategies.
Reading: Weinstein, C. E., & Acee, T. W. (2018). Study and learning strategies. *Handbook of college reading and study strategy research.*

Week 9
Learning Objective: Students will be introduced to motivation and apply it with the social cognitive theory.
M: An introduction to terms and research in motivation.
Reading: Seifert, K., & Sutton, R. (2018). Motivation theories on learning. https://lidtfoundations.pressbooks.com/chapter/student-motivation/
W: Application of motivation from the perspective of the social cognitive theory provided by Schunk.
Reading: Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2020). Motivation and social cognitive theory.

Week 10
Learning Objective: Students will learn about classroom management styles and supportive environments to help ensure a community of belonging and academic success.
M: Classroom management and its implications of teacher education to plan and organize classroom activities.
Reading: Emmer, E. T., & Stough, L. M. (2001). Classroom management: A critical part of educational psychology, with implications for teacher education.
W: Supportive environment: building community and a sense of belonging.
Reading: Furrer, C. J., Skinner, E. A., & Pitzer, J. R. (2014). The influence of teacher and peer relationships on students' classroom engagement and everyday motivational resilience.

Week 11
Learning Objective: We will discuss individual differences with students who are academically gifted and students with disabilities. Students will also understand the importance of culture and identity and its effects on education.
M: Connections between culture, identity, and education.
Reading: Ligorio, M. B. (2010). Dialogical relationship between identity and learning.
W: Learner differences between academically gifted students, students with disabilities, and general education students.
Reading: Schulte, A. C., Stevens, J. J., Elliott, S. N., Tindal, G., & Nese, J. F. T. (2016). Achievement gaps for students with disabilities: Stable, widening, or narrowing on a state-wide reading comprehension test.
Assignment: Observation Assignment – Individual Assignment DUE

Week 12
Learning Objective: Students will discuss family influences and involvement and its importance for the success of student's education.
M: Understanding the relationship of family involvement and their children's education.
Reading: Barger, M. M., Kim, E. M., Kuncel, N. R., & Pomerantz, E. M. (2019). The relation between parents' involvement in children's schooling and children's adjustment: A meta-analysis
W: Acquisition in relation to the underrepresented.
Reading: Hall-Cuarón, B. (2017). Attachment theory in relation to literacy/reading acquisition for immigrants, refugees, and the disenfranchised.

Week 13
Learning Objective: Students will learn about assessment strategies, types, and their contributions to teaching and learning.
M: Assessment systems to help achieve educational goals.
Reading: Pellegrino, J. W. (2014). Assessment as a positive influence on 21st century teaching and learning: A systems approach to progress.
W: The role of classroom assessment and its implications in learning.
Reading: Wiliam, D. (2013). Assessment: The bridge between teaching and learning.

Week 14
Learning Objective: Students will discuss about the future directions for the field of educational psychology. Topics include: educational psychology's contributions to science, and how to be more inclusive with cultural sensitivity in educational psychology.
M: Contributions of educational psychology to different fields of research.
Reading: Mayer, R. E. (2018). Educational psychology's past and future contributions to the science of learning, science of instruction, and science of assessment.
W: Enhancing culture representation in educational psychology.
Reading: King, R. B., McInerney, D. M., & Pitliya, R. J. (2018). Envisioning a culturally imaginative educational psychology.

Week 15
Learning Objective: This class will be dedicated to open discussion about the course. Students are to reflect and discuss their biggest lessons from the course, aspects that they enjoyed, topics they were not a fond of, etc. Professor is expected to receive feedback from students to use to accommodate the curriculum for future semesters.
M: Take-away from this course
Assignment: Observation Assignment – Group Project DUE

Week 16
Learning Objective: Students will practice presentation skills through their collaborative Final Group Project Presentations.
Assignment: Submit presentation before the scheduled final time.
FINAL DATE AND TIME

<u>**Course Resources –**</u> This course only requires access to a media equipped classroom.

<u>**Suggested Textbooks and Other Learning Resources –**</u>

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