

PSY 325-01
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:50 p.m.
1310 Au Sable Hall

Brian Bowdle, Course Instructor

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Course Description

Educational psychology is the scientific study of teaching and learning. The field is interdisciplinary in nature, and seeks to understand the cognitive, social, emotional, and developmental processes that are relevant to education. Among the topics to be considered are instructional design, classroom management, and student assessment. Special attention will be paid during the second half of the semester to controversial issues in education and alternative models of schooling.

Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you should be able to (a) describe how the science of psychology can inform our understanding of teaching and learning; (b) explain how various research methods can address important educational questions; (c) summarize the results of some current research in educational psychology; and (d) recognize and apply evidence-based teaching and learning strategies.

Blackboard

Our Blackboard website is an integral component of this course. You will be using Blackboard to submit all our writing assignments. And I will be using Blackboard to post important announcements and send messages to members of this class, which you should monitor on a regular basis.

Required Books

There are five required books for this course, which are listed here in the order we will be reading them:

- Cathy Rogers and Michael S. C. Thomas (2023) – *Educational Neuroscience*
- Daniel T. Willingham (2021) – *Why Don't Students Like School?* (second edition)
- Paul Tough (2016) – *Helping Children Succeed*
- Peter Gray (2013) – *Free to Learn*
- E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (2020) – *How to Educate a Citizen*

These books constitute the intellectual core of this course, and everyone is expected to keep up with the readings throughout the semester.

Course Evaluation

The maximum number of points you can receive in this course is 270, and point totals will be translated into grades at the end of the term using this scale:

251 – 270 points = A	197 – 207 points = C
243 – 250 points = A-	189 – 196 points = C-
235 – 242 points = B+	181 – 188 points = D+
224 – 234 points = B	170 – 180 points = D
216 – 223 points = B-	162 – 169 points = D-
208 – 215 points = C+	161 points or less = F

Grades will be cumulatively determined by the following:

Attendance and Participation. Your attendance will be recorded, and – along with your in-class participation – is worth 60 points. You are allowed to miss one class meeting for any reason without penalty. After that, however, each unexcused absence will count against your attendance score.

GVSU's official attendance policy, which includes information about what counts as an excused absence, can be found at <https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/2021-2022/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm#anchor-44>. I will need some kind of documentation to forgive more than one missed session.

Journal. Throughout the semester, you will be keeping a written journal on Blackboard documenting your reactions to our assigned readings. The nine journal entries you submit are worth ten points apiece, or 90 points in total. You should have three basic goals in mind when writing each journal entry.

First, you should begin your entry by describing and discussing three different concepts, theories, or studies from the readings that struck you as especially important (and perhaps even surprising) in relation to teaching and learning. Do not merely paraphrase the relevant sections of the readings – I would also like you to reflect on their educational implications and applications.

Second, you should continue your entry by comparing two different recommendations from the readings with your own experiences as a student. Feel free to connect these recommendations to memories associated with any stage of your education, from preschool or kindergarten right up to your time here at GVSU.

And third, you should end your entry by coming up with a question about anything from the readings that you feel could stimulate an interesting and meaningful class discussion. Be sure to indicate how you yourself would respond to this question.

To summarize, each journal entry should contain **three reflections** on ideas from the readings, **two connections** between the readings and your own educational experiences, and **one question** that can be raised during class. I encourage you to use separate paragraphs to accomplish each of these goals.

The minimum length of each journal entry should be 450 words, and every entry must include a word count at the bottom. Journal due dates are listed in our course schedule. Unless arrangements have been made in advance, late entries will not be accepted.

Quizzes. There will be nine multiple-choice quizzes this semester, each covering the assigned readings for the week in which it is given. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped. The remaining quizzes are worth ten point apiece, or 80 points in total. Quiz dates are listed in our course schedule. Unless arrangements have been made in advance, missed quizzes cannot be made up.

Critical Debate. Working in a group, you will give a presentation to the rest of the class in which you take on a “hot topic” in educational psychology. Your presentation – including the research that went into preparing it - is worth 40 points. Detailed instructions for our series of critical debates will be given on February 8.

Students with Disabilities

If anyone in this class has special needs because of a cognitive, physical, or other disability, please let me know, and contact Disability Support Resources (DSR) at 616-331-2490. Although students with disabilities are held to the same academic standards as all other students, accommodations will be provided as appropriate.

GVSU Policies

This course is subject to all the GVSU policies regarding enrollment, grading, academic integrity, and fairness listed at <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE FOR PSY 325-01

All our class meetings are on Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:50 p.m. in 1310 Au Sable Hall. Be sure to complete any assigned readings and the associated journal entry the day before we meet each week.

Introduction

January 11 **Class meeting** – overview of course.

Mind and Brain (Foundational Concepts)

January 17 Finish reading Chapters 1 through 3 of *Educational Neuroscience*.
Journal Entry 1 is due.

January 18 **Class meeting** – Quiz 1 followed by discussion of assigned chapters.

January 24 Finish reading Chapters 4 through 6 of *Educational Neuroscience*.
Journal Entry 2 is due.

January 25 **Class meeting** – Quiz 2 followed by discussion of assigned chapters.

January 31 Finish reading Chapters 7 through 9 of *Educational Neuroscience*.
Journal Entry 3 is due.

February 1 **Class meeting** – Quiz 3 followed by discussion of assigned chapters.

Controversies in Education, Part One: Setting the Stage

February 8 **Class meeting** – instructions for the critical debate project.

Thinking and Learning (A Deep Dive into Cognition)

February 14 Finish reading the Introduction and Chapters 1 through 3 of *Why Don't Students Like School?*
Journal Entry 4 is due.

February 15 **Class meeting** – Quiz 4 followed by discussion of assigned chapters.

February 21 Finish reading Chapters 4 through 6 of *Why Don't Students Like School?*
Journal Entry 5 is due.

February 22 **Class meeting** – Quiz 5 followed by discussion of assigned chapters.

February 28 Finish reading Chapters 7 through 10 and the Conclusion of *Why Don't Students Like School?*
Journal Entry 6 is due.

February 29 **Class meeting** – Quiz 6 followed by discussion of assigned chapters.

Spring Break!

Adversity And Resilience (The Challenges of Childhood)

March 13 Finish reading *Helping Children Succeed*.
Journal Entry 7 is due.

March 14 **Class meeting** – Quiz 7 followed by discussion of assigned book.

Controversies in Education, Part Two: Showtime

March 21 **Debate team meetings.**

March 28 **Class meeting** – first and second critical debates.

April 4 **Class meeting** – third and fourth critical debates.

Reconsidering Play (The Sudbury Valley Model)

April 10 Finish reading *Free to Learn*.
Journal Entry 8 is due.

April 11 **Class meeting** – Quiz 8 followed by discussion of assigned book.

Reconsidering Cultural Literacy (The Core Knowledge Model)

April 17 Finish reading *How to Educate a Citizen*.
Journal Entry 9 is due.

April 18 **Class meeting** – Quiz 9 followed by discussion of assigned book.

Conclusion

April 25 **Class meeting** – final thoughts.