

**PSY 325-01**  
**EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:50 p.m.  
512 Eberhard Center

**Brian Bowdle, Course Instructor**

Office: 2311 Au Sable Hall  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Office Phone: (616) 331-2420  
Email: [bowdleb@gvsu.edu](mailto:bowdleb@gvsu.edu)

**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 throughout the semester to controversial issues in education, alternative models of schooling, and distinguishing science from pseudoscience.

**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.

**Course Materials**

Throughout the semester, we will be grappling with a variety of academic and nonacademic books and articles. These materials are briefly described below. The dates of all reading assignments are given in our course schedule.

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

- Paul A. Kirschner and Carl Hendrick (2024) – *How Learning Happens* (second edition)
- Michael I. Axelrod and Stephen Hupp (2024) – *Investigating School Psychology*
- Peter Gray (2020) – *Mother Nature's Pedagogy*
- Paul Tough (2016) – *Helping Children Succeed*
- 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 assigned chapters throughout the semester.

**Focus Articles.** We will also be reading ten articles this semester that will serve as the focus of extended class discussions. All such articles are available on Blackboard.

## **Course Evaluation**

The maximum number of points you can receive in this course is 300, and point totals will be translated into grades at the end of the term using this scale:

279 – 300 points = A	219 – 230 points = C
270 – 278 points = A-	210 – 218 points = C-
261 – 269 points = B+	201 – 209 points = D+
249 – 260 points = B	189 – 200 points = D
240 – 248 points = B-	180 – 188 points = D-
231 – 239 points = C+	179 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 chapters and focus articles. The ten journal entries you submit are worth 12 points apiece, or 120 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 offer six things: **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 would like you to use separate paragraphs to accomplish each of these goals. Also, please note that no more than two of these six offerings – say, one reflection and one connection – can be based on a single chapter or article.

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 ten multiple-choice quizzes this semester, each covering the assigned chapters and focus article for the week in which it is given. Your two lowest quiz scores 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 13.

### **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/>.

### **Generative AI Policy**

Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT and Copilot) are evolving at a rapid rate, and you may already recognize some of the ways this technology can enhance productivity. For the purposes of this course, however, these tools should not be adopted as shortcuts to avoid reading, thinking, and writing for yourself.

The use of generative AI is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Finding additional information about a topic;
- Brainstorming and refining your ideas for a class project;
- Assisting in the layout of class presentation slides; and
- Checking the grammar and style of your writing.

The use of generative AI is NOT permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Writing a draft of an assignment;
- Creating paragraphs or even sentences to complete assignments; and
- Impersonating you in online class activities.

Any such unauthorized applications of generative AI tools will be treated as academic misconduct.

You should also refrain from using AI reading assistants to create summaries of any of our books and articles as a way to sidestep actually reading them. Such summaries nearly always miss the intellectual and emotional nuances of the original material, convey almost none of the author's voice and style, and sometimes contain major inaccuracies (“hallucinations”). By engaging directly with each of our readings, you will develop a far deeper understanding and appreciation of the author's message.

If you wind up having any questions or concerns about my generative AI policy – this is new territory, after all – please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

## COURSE SCHEDULE FOR PSY 325-01

All our class meetings are on Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:50 p.m. in 512 Eberhard Center. Be sure to complete any assigned readings and the associated journal entry the day before we meet each week.

### Introduction (Week 1)

January 9      **Class meeting** – overview of course.

### Memory and Cognition (Week 2)

Readings:      Chapters 1 through 5 of *How Learning Happens*  
The Preface of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“Optimizing Learning in College” (focus article)

January 15      Journal Entry 1 is due.

January 16      **Class meeting** – Quiz 1 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

### How Does Our Brain Work? (Week 3)

Readings:      Chapters 6 through 10 of *How Learning Happens*  
Chapter 9 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“Cognitive Enhancements and the Values of Higher Education” (focus article)

January 22      Journal Entry 2 is due.

January 23      **Class meeting** – Quiz 2 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

### Is School Unnatural? (Week 4)

Readings:      All of *Mother Nature's Pedagogy*  
Chapter 2 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“Are Colleges Getting Disability Accommodational All Wrong?” (focus article)

January 29      Journal Entry 3 is due.

January 30      **Class meeting** – Quiz 3 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

### Prerequisites for Learning (Week 5)

Readings:      Chapters 11 through 16 of *How Learning Happens*  
Chapter 13 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“The Bad Test-Taker Identity” (focus article)

February 5      Journal Entry 4 is due.

February 6      **Class meeting** – Quiz 4 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

### Controversies in Education, Part One: Setting the Stage (Week 6)

February 13      **Class meeting** – instructions for the critical debate project.

## Which Learning Activities Support Learning? (Week 7)

Readings: Chapters 17 through 20 of *How Learning Happens*  
Chapter 10 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“Textbase and Situation Model Representations as Educational Constructs”  
(focus article)

February 19 Journal Entry 5 is due.

February 20 **Class meeting** – Quiz 5 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

## The Teacher (Week 8)

Readings: Chapters 21 through 26 of *How Learning Happens*  
Chapter 14 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“Helping or Harming?” (focus article)

February 26 Journal Entry 6 is due.

February 27 **Class meeting** – Quiz 6 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

## Spring Break (Week 9)

*Relax and enjoy!*

## Learning in Context (Week 10)

Readings: Chapters 27 through 30 of *How Learning Happens*  
Chapter 3 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“An Interview with Sherry Turkle” (focus article)

March 12 Journal Entry 7 is due.

March 13 **Class meeting** – Quiz 7 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

## Controversies in Education, Part Two: Showtime (Weeks 11 to 13)

March 17 Annotated bibliography entries are due.

March 20 **Debate team meetings.**

March 27 **Class meeting** – first and second critical debates.

April 3 **Class meeting** – third and fourth critical debates.

## Adversity and Resilience (Week 14)

Readings: All of *Helping Children Succeed*  
Chapter 4 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“A Program for At-Risk High School Students Informed by Evolutionary Science”  
(focus article)

April 9 Journal Entry 8 is due.

April 10 **Class meeting** – Quiz 8 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

### Cautionary Tales (Week 15)

Readings: Chapters 31 through 35 of *How Learning Happens*  
Chapter 5 of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“How to Teach Critical Thinking” (focus article)

April 16 Journal Entry 9 is due.

April 17 **Class meeting** – Quiz 9 followed by discussion of assigned readings.

### Cultural Literacy (Week 16)

Readings: All of *How to Educate a Citizen*  
The Postscript of *Investigating School Psychology*  
“What Every American Should Know” (focus article)

April 23 Journal Entry 10 is due.

April 24 **Class meeting** – Quiz 10 followed by discussion of assigned readings.