

PSYCHOLOGY IN EDUCATION

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Annotation: Psychology and education are connected with each other, because if teachers do not understand student's feelings, they can not make them learn something new. Ironically, there are some teachers who can manage their class to be focused on the lesson during hours because of their understandings about children and other people. So, we can not imagine teaching without psychology.

Key words: precaution, bias, behavior, physical movement, cause-effect relationship, fundamental principle, notion, approach, consideration, child-centered education.

Educational psychology is one of the branches of applied psychology concerned with the application of the principles, techniques and other resources of psychology to the solution of the problems confronting the teacher attempting to direct the growth of children toward defined objectives. More specifically, we can say educational psychology is concerned with an understanding of:

- The child, his development, his need and his potentialities.
- The learning situation including group dynamics as they affect learning.
- The learning process its nature and the ways to make it effective. Stated differently, the Central theme of Educational Psychology is Psychology of learning.

This area is concerned with such problems as : How do children acquire skills? When is learning more effective? What are the factors that help the learning Process? How do we measure the amount of learning? Are there any economic methods of memorizing? Why do we forget? Can memory be improved? Does the study of Sanskrit help more than study of Hindi? Psychology helps the teacher to get answers to these questions. It tells us that learning becomes more effective if factors like motivation and interest are taken into consideration by every teacher. The knowledge of psychology has helped the teacher in modifying her approach to the teaching learning process. The study of educational Psychology has brought about change in the approach and therefore we have child centred education. Psychological principles are used in formulation curriculum for different stage. Attempts are made to provide subjects and activities in the curriculum which are in conformity with the needs of the students, their developmental characteristics, learning patterns and also needs of the society.

The experimental group is given a program of instruction—or some other intervention—that presumably causes changes in the dependent variable. This program

or intervention is intentionally withheld from a comparably chosen control group in order to provide a baseline against which changes in the experimental group can be compared. The process of randomization, which allows large numbers of individuals to have an equal opportunity to be chosen for inclusion in the study and for participation in either the experimental or the control group, increases the generalizability of the research findings to other research contexts and learners. For example, suppose you were designing a study to determine the effect of correcting spelling errors. You would randomly assign children to one of three groups, and each group would experience a different type of error correction: Group 1 would be corrected but given no practice; Group 2 would be corrected and made to practice the mistake, and Group 3's mistakes would be ignored. This last group is the control group, against whose results the results of the other groups would be compared. Most of the research you will read about in this text—research on how children learn, follow classroom rules, exhibit more motivation, improve self-esteem, and get along with classmates—has been accumulated by use of experimental research techniques. These studies have used the process of randomization to achieve generalizability of results to a broad population of classrooms and learners.

There are many false notions about psychology and psychologists. Psychology is not mind reading and psychologists are not gifted with mystic powers; they are not demi-gods with spiritual powers. They cannot size up people effortlessly; they cannot assess the character, the personality of the individual at a glance. There are many self-styled psychologists who claim to study personality and thoughts of an individual by his physical features, his handwriting by the way he is seated, by the style of his walking. They are psycho-quacks. Psychology is a science and psychologist is a scientist. Science is a body of verifiable knowledge based on observation and experimentation. Scientists do not take things for granted; they observe, investigate and find truth by themselves. Science begins with observation. The fundamental principle of science is to seek facts rather than depend upon authority or sheer speculation. Scientist begins with questions, looks for relevant data and observes under controlled conditions. He is not trying to prove something; he is testing something; he is impartial and objective; he is intellectually honest and open-minded. Psychology was once a branch of philosophy. It was defined as a study of soul; then as a study of mind (mental philosophy) and later as a study of consciousness and now as a study of behaviour. Psychology is a collection of several subfields. Some psychologists employ basic research (development of theories). Some applied research (testing theories) some provide professional services (teaching, counseling and the like). Basic Research is often employed by Biological Psychologists (links between brain and mind), Developmental Psychologists (growth and development from birth), Cognitive psychologists (how we perceive.. Imagine think, reason and solve problems) and

Personality Psychologists (how we perceive influence one another). Applied Research is employed by (Industrial / Organizational Psychologists) and Educational Psychologists. Clinical Psychologists study and assess troubled people: they administer and interpret tests, provide psychotherapy and mental health programmes. They conduct both basic and applied research. Psychiatrists are medical doctors; they prescribe drugs or other methods to treat physical causes of psychological disorders. A theory is a statement that establishes a cause – effect relationship between factors (variables). A Psychological theory is an explanation through a set of criteria that predicts behaviours. Behaviour is your response to a situation with which you are confronted. Behaviour may be internal (implicit, covert) or external (explicit, overt). Any behaviour which can be observed, interpreted and evaluated is external - physical movements, gestures and facial expressions, the way we walk, the way we talk and the like behaviours. Internal behaviour refers to our thoughts and feelings which cannot be observed directly. Action is external; Motive is internal. For every action there is a corresponding motive. No action is motiveless. There may be different motives which generate the same action. A motive may cause different actions. Research studies focus more on internal behaviours than on external ones. Psychologists who attempt to modify or refine external behaviour must investigate and identify the corresponding internal behaviour. Then only their attempts will be effective. Psychologists view human behaviour as a result of ‘inside’ forces or ‘outside’ forces. Inside forces refer to needs, wants, desires, interests, attitudes, feelings and the like. Outside forces refer to attractive or disturbing aspects of the situation, attitudes and expectations of others, social approval or rejection, rewards, dangers, threats and so forth.

Psychology can also be seen as a bridge between philosophy and physiology. Where physiology describes and explains a simple make-up of the brain and nervous system, psychology examines the mental processes that take place within them and how these are manifested in our thoughts, speech and behavior. Where philosophy is concerned with thoughts and ideas, psychology studies how we come to have them and what they tell us about the workings of our mind. The first definition of the Psychology was the study of the soul: The earliest attempts at defining Psychology owe their origin to the most mysterious and philosophical concept, namely that of soul.

What is soul? How can it be studied? The inability to find clear answers to such questions led some ancient Greek philosophers to define psychology as the study of the mind. In terms of the study of the mind: Although the word mind was less mysterious and vague than soul, yet it also faced the same questions, namely what is mind? How can it be studied, etc. This definition was also rejected. In terms of the study of consciousness: The description and explanation of the states of consciousness is the task of Psychology which is usually done by the instrument introspection— process of looking within. This definition was also rejected on the grounds that:

a) It could not include the study of the consciousness of animals.

b) It would not include subconscious and unconscious activities of mind.

c) The introspection method for the study proved that it is most subjective and unscientific method. In terms of the study of behaviour: The most modern and widely accepted definition of psychology even today, is the study of behaviour, both humans and animals. William McDougall: In his book, "Psychology is a science which aims to give us better understanding and control of the behaviour of the organism as a whole". JB Watson: "Psychology is the science of behaviour" (taking into account the human as well as animal behaviour). NL Munn: "Psychology is the science and the properly trained psychologist is a scientist, or at least a practitioner who uses scientific methods and information resulting from scientific investigations". Science is the body of systematized knowledge that is gathered by carefully observing and measuring events. The observation of events is systematized in various ways but mainly classifying them into categories and establishing general laws and principles to describe and predict events as accurately as possible. Psychology has these characteristics; it clearly belongs within the province of science. Thus it is not simply enough to describe behaviour. Like any other science, psychology attempts to explain, predict, modify and ultimately improve the lives of people in the world in which they live. By using scientific methods psychologists are able to find answers to questions about the nature of human behaviour that are far more valid and legitimate than those resulting from mere intention and speculation. The experiments and observations which are made can be repeated and verified by others because of its objectivity, reliability, validity and predictability which are the characteristics of basic science.

Essential guidelines for making good observation:

1. Observe one individual at a time. It is desirable to focus attention on just one individual at a time in order to collect comprehensive data.

2. Have a specific criteria for making observations. The purpose of making observation should be clear to the observe before he or she begins to observe so that the essential characteristics or the behaviour of the person fulfilling the purpose can be noted.

3. Observations should be made over a period of time. To have a real estimate of the true behaviour of a person it should be observed as frequently as possible. A single observation will not be sufficient to tell us that this is the characteristic of the individual.

4. The observations should be made in differing and natural situations in natural settings to increase its validity. For example, a pupil's behaviour in the classroom may not be typical of him; therefore he should be observed in variety of settings to know the behaviour most typical of the person.

5. Observe the pupil in the context of the total situation.

6. The observed facts must be recorded instantly, that is just at the time of their occurrence otherwise the observer may forget some of the facts and the recording may not be accurate.

7. It is better to have two or more observers.

8. Observations should be made under favourable conditions. The observer should be in position to clearly observe what he or she is observing. There should not be any undue distraction or disturbances. One should also have an attitude free from any biases or prejudices against the individual being observed.

9. Data from observations should be integrated with other data. While arriving at the final conclusion about the individual, one should put together all that we know about the individual from the other sources then we can give an integrated and comprehensive picture of the individual. These precautions must be born in mind in order to have reliable observations.

In experimental studies, however, researchers directly change one of the variables of interest—the independent variable—to see how the change influences another variable of interest—the dependent variable. Such studies use experimental groups and control groups; learners are assigned to either group on a random basis. The experimental group is given a program of instruction—or some other intervention—that presumably causes changes in the dependent variable.

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