

**EPSY2020H Honors Learning and Development**  
Professor Paula J. Schwanenflugel  
Spring 2003

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**The Goals of this Course**

My view is that prospective and current teachers need to know about the basic cognitive, developmental and motivational issues that might impact classroom learning. My goal is that you be able to discern pedagogical practices and materials that make “good cognitive, motivational, and developmental sense” from those that represent “sheer nonsense.” You will learn how to put this good sense into practice in thinking about particular children.

It is important that honors students, in particular, come to appreciate that education is a science as well as an art---that is, that there are ways to evaluate the research underlying educational programming and scientific ways for investigating our own questions about educational practice. In short, I want you to view your teaching as a personal empirical science and to be able to link your practice to researchable issues.

Consequently, this course will involve both scientific theory-testing and service-learning elements.

**Course requirements**

**Weekly assignments.** There will be **no exams**, but there will be a 1-3 page written assignment due each Thursday. Full credit can only be given for those assignments handed in on time. Penalty for tardiness is one letter grade for each week late beginning the day it is late. These assignments will be one of two types:

1. **Experiment write-ups** (35% of your grade). You will be responsible for writing up the assigned part of an experiment conducted in class in APA style. These will be due on alternate Thursdays (see timetable) and will be graded as follows:
  - (A) Your adherence to APA style, general writing, and understanding of the scientific method underlying the experiment (45%)
  - (B) Your basic understanding of the topic of the experiment as reflected in the report (45%)
  - (C) Whether you attended and were on time the day that we talked about and discussed the experiment (10%)

2. **Reflections on Tutoring** (35% of your grade).

You and a partner from class will tutor a child from Barrow Elementary for 45 min or so a week on the subject area designated by that child’s teacher. I ask you to complete the reading relating to the subject matter that you are teaching prior to meeting the first time with your tutee. However, the main goal of this assignment is to have you reflect on your tutee in light of what you are learning in class. These reflections will also be due on alternate Fridays (see timetable) and will be graded on your general ability to relate the class materials to your thinking about your tutee. Some questions you might consider are:

- ! Have I noticed any of the phenomena talked about in class or in the book on this topic in my tutee? Describe.
- ! What implications does the research on this topic have for my teaching my tutee?
- ! Was I able to adjust my tutoring in some way to take advantage of the cognitive developmental attributes of my tutee? Did I notice any improvement as a function of these changes?
- ! What progress is my tutor making?

I believe these reflections will be more valuable to you and your tutoring partner if you reflect together about how class materials relate to your tutee, but it is not required. However, each is responsible for handing in an independent reflection. These reflections will be graded on a scale of:

- 7 - Problematic in that you didn't really understand the material or how it related to your tutee very much but you completed the assignment in an acceptable fashion,  
8- good work, but you had some difficulty relating the class material to the tutee,  
9- Very good work and you should feel good about your ability to relate the class material to your tutee (modal grade)  
10- Superb, exceptional work and your insights impressed the daylights out of me

**Attendance for tutoring is mandatory.** You must meet with your child weekly. Children come to depend on the relationship with their adult tutee. So, as adults, you are responsible for not letting children down. You are more important than you know. Consequently, if you identify yourself as an adult who cannot be responsible for children, you will receive **no credit** for this portion of the course. The only excuses I accept for missing your tutoring session are sickness or death in the family. I require copies of the note from your doctor or the death certificate. Even then, you need to leave a message for your tutee by calling the school prior to your missed tutoring session at 543-2676.

**Final Project** (30% of final grade). Your final project is an experiment of your own design (or a replication of an experiment in the literature) to test some issue on cognition and motivation that you found particularly relevant during your tutoring, if possible. If not, it can be on some other issue that you and your partner are curious about. This should be done in conjunction with your tutoring partner. However, the experiment should be conducted on adults, not children. We will use each other as "subjects" for your experiment. This will be a full experimental report including title page, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, references (8 minimum), and tables/figures. You will need to run at least 10 participants and construct your own stimuli.

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#### **Readings**

Required text:

S.K. Reed (1996). **Cognition**. NY: Brooks/Cole.

Other readings (Main Library on Reserve):

Kantowitz, B. H., & Roediger, H.L. (1994). *Experimental psychology: Understanding psychological research*. NY: West Publishing Co. [Chapters 2 and 3].

*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (2000). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. [Chapter 1, Figure 1]

Woolfolk, A.E. (2001). *Educational Psychology*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. [Chapters 10,14 and 15].

Bruning, R. H., Schraw, G. J., & Ronning, R. R. (1999). *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction*. (pp. 95-105).

Linn, R.L. (2000). Assessments and accountability. *Educational Researcher*, 29, 4-16.

Geary, D.C. (1994). *Children's mathematical development*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. [Chapters 1-3]

#### **Or**

Mayer, R.E. (1998). *The promise of educational psychology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill. [Chapters 2 (Reading Fluency) and 3 (Reading Comprehension)]

## **Anticipated Timetable:**

Week 1: Scientific method and statistics (mean, standard deviation, t-test, correlation)

Readings: Kantowitz & Roediger, Chapters 2 & 3  
(Either) the Geary or Mayer chapter

Week 2: Analyzing data, The research report

Activity: sorting manuscript parts  
Readings: Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, Chapter 1, Figure 1  
[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_ap.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_ap.html)

Week 3: Attention

Experiment: Stroop interference and automaticity  
Readings: Reed, Chapter 3  
WRITE-UP OF STATISTICS HOMEWORK

Week 4: Short term memory

Experiment: Short-term memory and familiarity of material to be processed  
Readings: Reed, Chapter 4  
WRITE-UP OF INTRODUCTION FOR STROOP EXPERIMENT

Week 5: Long term memory, characteristics and coding strategies

Experiment: Levels of Processing  
Readings: Reed, Chapters 5 and 6  
REFLECTION: what I have noticed about my tutee's attention, automaticity, short term memory and how I have used this knowledge to better my tutoring

Week 6: Conceptual Organization and Vocabulary Development

Experiment: Learning the meanings of new words from context  
Readings: Reed, Chapter 9  
WRITE-UP OF ABSTRACT AND METHODS FOR LEVELS OF PROCESSING EXPERIMENT

Week 7: Reading Comprehension

Experiment: Comprehension-friendly and unfriendly texts  
Readings: Reed, Chapter 11  
REFLECTION: what I have noticed about my tutee's memory, word reading, vocabulary and how I have used my knowledge in my tutoring

Week 8: Metacognition and Strategy Use

Experiment: Comprehension monitoring experiment  
Readings: Bruning, Schraw, & Ronning, pp. 95-104; Geary, Chapter 2  
WRITE-UP OF TITLE PAGE, RESULTS OF COMPREHENSION EXPERIMENT

Week 9: Mathematical Problem Solving

! Activity: Examining children's math word problems from current texts for difficulty features  
Readings: Geary, Chapter 3  
REFLECTION: what I have noticed about my tutee's ability to monitor comprehension and the general comprehensibility of what he or she is being asked to read and how I have used my knowledge to better tutor

Week 10: Motivation in the classroom

Experiment: The influence of competition on learning goals  
Readings: Woolfolk, Chapter 10  
WRITE-UP OF DISCUSSION FOR MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM SOLVING EXPERIMENT

Week 11: Expertise — what happens as we become more knowledgeable people

Experiment: Knowledge networks and expertise

Readings: Reed, Chapter 13

REFLECTION: what I have noticed about my tutee's motivation, my tutee's teacher's motivational strategies, and how I have tried to motivate my tutee

Week 12: Standardized testing

Activity: Interpreting the outcome of a standardized achievement test

Readings: Woolfolk, Chapter 14; Linn article

Week 13: Classroom Assessment and Grading

Activity: Creating a college portfolio

Readings: Woolfolk, Chapter 15

WRITE-UP OF INTERPRETATION OF OUTCOME OF AN ITBS TEST AND HOW I MIGHT USE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO BETTER TEACH A CHILD WITH SCORES LIKE THESE

Week 14 & 15: Independent work on projects.

**Final Project due:** Wednesday, May 7, noon