

Fall 2021
Psychology of Learning
3 Credits

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| Dr. Janice Gobert | janice.gobert@gse.rutgers.edu |
| Office Hours by arrangement. | Prerequisites or other limitations: None |
| Mode of Instruction: <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Other | Permission required: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |

Course Catalog Description

Introduction to psychological theories of human learning, including behavioral, social, and cognitive theories of learning. Principles of learning and transfer are discussed, as deduced from these theories. A key set of other variables relevant to learning, such as motivation, engagement, metacognitive learning, etc., are also discussed.

Class Materials

There is no textbook in this course. Class materials consist of daily readings that will be posted on canvas. Please note: If you are reading ahead, please check with me, because I may make changes in later readings based on what I learn about the class from discussions in earlier days. If I decide that a different reading may be a better choice for the class, I may make substitutions.

Features of an Online Course

As most of you will already know, an online course differs from a traditional face-to-face course in a number of ways. In particular, for this class:

- A. There is a strong emphasis on student-driven learning. The instructor role is of overall facilitator and coordinator.
- B. You will be able to work at your convenience (for the most part). But it is important to be seriously engaged in the learning process. This is quite different from a traditional course, in which it is perfectly fine to prepare the day before, go to class the day of class, and then not think about the course the other five days a week. It is *especially* important during a five-week online course that you work at least a few times each week in order to read others' posts, see my comments on posts, etc.
- C. Students do more of the integrative work than in a face-to-face class. This is likely to support knowledge building on your part (**see the early to better understand Knowledge Building**).

Learning Goals

This course is designed to help you acquire the knowledge and competencies shown in the following table. (The alignment of the learning goals with the overall learning goals of the LCD Master’s degree is also shown in the table. In addition, the table shows how each goal will be assessed.

| LCD master’s program goals | Course goals | Assessment of course goals |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Attain mastery of psychological constructs and theories relevant to learning and cognition; some issues relevant to development will be addressed. | 1a. Gain knowledge of theories of learning and teaching. 1b. Gain knowledge of empirical results on learning and teaching. 1c. Gain knowledge of effective and ineffective strategies for learning and thinking, based on 1a. | via discussions and tasks as assigned, your understanding. In your paper (topic to be agreed upon with the professor), you will read and synthesize a set of journal articles (8-10) in a topic related to the Psychology of Learning. |
| 2. Appropriately apply these psychological constructs and theories to educational settings and related applied contexts. | 2. Develop skills to understand why an educational approach works. | Regarding 2 (left), you will discuss how your journal articles apply to instructional settings. |
| 3. Identify and explain evidence for and against different psychological constructs and theories. | 3a. Identify and explain evidence for and against different theories of learning and instruction. | In the daily discussions, you discuss evidence for and against theoretical and practical claims, and you will critique, both methodologically and theoretically (where appropriate), the studies you read. In your class paper, you will discuss and explain evidence supporting the points you make, and you will critically evaluate the key pieces of evidence that you review as part of your paper. |
| 4. Achieve skill in the critical evaluation of empirical evidence related to the psychology of education. | 4a. Develop skills of learning to read and interpret empirical articles on learning and instruction. | |
| 5. Attain competence in oral and written communication on topics within educational psychology. | 5a. Develop skills of writing a literature review (or a teaching plan on a topic, as determined in consultation with the professor) related to learning and/or instruction. | In the class paper, you will write either a review of research or a practical paper applying what you have learned to the design or evaluation of instruction. |

Academic Integrity Policy

The Office of Student Conduct supervises issues related to violations of academic integrity (see <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>). Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on academic integrity at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_2013.pdf

Academic integrity policy proscribes any form of cheating, including plagiarism. **Plagiarism will be addressed in accordance with the University policy.** Please keep in mind that the penalty for plagiarism can include suspension and even permanent expulsion from the university.

Here's a thinking tool to help you decide whether you have committed plagiarism, even if it was unintentional. Imagine that Google had every word ever written on its servers (all published and unpublished writing, including all students' writing from all courses at the GSE and other universities, from all of history through this moment). Would a Google search on any extended phrase or clause in your document yield a hit on even one of these papers recorded through history? (Remember: this includes your own past papers, classmates' papers, text on any website, and all published papers.) If the answer is yes, and you have not cited that document and quoted the text, there may be a plagiarism problem.

Office of Disability Services

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Regular Communication with Class via Email

I will frequently send emails or announcements through canvas during this class. In fact, this will be the most important way in which I share reflections with you about the problems and discussions. Therefore, please be sure that you are checking your official student RU email regularly through the semester.

Weekly Schedule

The asynchronous discussions allow an extended time to reflect on what we have read. Here is a typical schedule:

I will post articles to read about 1-2 times each week The main activities each week are as follows:

1. Discussions of readings.

Participate in discussions of the readings. It is important to start contributing promptly to these discussions. I expect everyone to contribute (**you are being graded on your posts**) and this is the means by which we are all advancing our understandings. Based on the comments I read in the forums, To reiterate, it is important that you get onto the discussion threads and contribute; this will help support your own and other's knowledge building.

In addition to discussions, you will have three additional due dates.

An article review, see below.

A one-page summary of your final paper with a bibliography of the papers you plan to use); see below.

A class paper; see below.

Schedule by Week (see excel file)

Reference Books:

Sawyer, K. (2014). *The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences* (2nd ed). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bransford, J. (2001). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Evaluation

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|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Discussions of readings | 35% |
| 3. Plan for paper | 15% |
| 4. Class paper | 50% |

A = 90% or higher

B+= 85% - 89%

B = 80% - 84%

C+= 75%- 79%

C = 70% - 74%

F = 69% or lower

1. Discussions of readings

Each week, you will discuss the readings within canvas discussion threads. We will focus on:

- Clarifying understanding of the readings. For research articles, this includes the research question, what the method was, what the results were, and whether the authors' conclusions are appropriate.
- Discussing applications and implications of the ideas you have read about.
- Please try to develop your own linkages across topics and across papers.

Your contributions to the discussions should indicate that you have read all the readings. I also expect that you will not simply stop at 1 contribution each week. I hope that your goal will be to participate in meaningful, interesting discussions by commenting on what your peers have written.

Your contributions to the discussions should collectively indicate that you have read all the readings, and they should show that you are using and applying the ideas you have learned about, like the work described by Scardamalia & Bereiter, the class should be engaged in knowledge-building for each topic. Thoughtful responses to questions and others' comments means that you use concepts from the text, show how the concepts are interrelated, connect these concepts to real experiences, and consider evidence for and against various ideas.

You should contribute at least 2x per week. I may pose follow-up questions in the latter half of the week that I would like us to reflect on.

Evaluation will be based on the number of contributions as well as the quality and timing (throughout the week) of your contributions.

Discussions are places to explore and entertain ideas. There should be no presumption that discussants are firmly committed to positions that they are presenting arguments for. It's fine to entertain different ideas as we go along.

2. Paper Planning

Each of you will provide an abstract (summary) of your final paper and 10 journal articles (not older than 2010) on your topic. These will be reviewed by me and changes will be requested if needed. Details on the final paper will help you to understand the goal of this assignment.

3. Class Paper

The class paper is to be 10 to 15 pages in length (double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font or Arial 11 point font). You can choose any topic connected in any way to educational psychology, so that you can find a topic that is relevant to your interests and of value to your future work. There will be a formal paper planning assignment so that you will be able to get feedback on your topic, etc. The paper will give you the opportunity to explore an aspect of the course in greater detail or extend a topic to another area. You may also pursue other areas not specifically addressed in-depth in the course (e.g. gender and ethnic differences, portfolio-based assessments, etc.). Please send the paper to me via email; label it as follows: 580 Section # CLASS PAPER Yourfirstname. For example: 580 Section 90 CLASS PAPER Janice Gobert.

Your paper should be based on reading at least 10 articles beyond what you have read as required reading for this class and other classes you have taken or are taking. In other words, these are 10 articles that are new to you, and that are not read for the purposes of the course. Your paper should present the “state of the art” on a specific topic related to the course; it can also present empirical articles and theoretical points that are different from each other (e.g. whole word vs. phonetics as an approach to teaching reading). The paper explores a particular issue in greater depth, it introduces the concept under study, highlights the main issues in the field, presents contrasting points of view and debates in the field. In the paper’s conclusion, you could apply relevant issues to a real world context, extend the topic to a new setting, or recommend future directions or avenues for research. **NOTE: Pick fairly current journal articles (not older than 10 years, unless they are classic, foundational papers).**

Paper Guidelines

Here are some initial guidelines as you write the class paper:

- Conciseness – try to write in a simple, clear, and non-repetitive way.
- Completeness and depth - present the necessary amount of detail to support your points. Write as though your audience is not an expert on your topic and in a way that demonstrates depth of analysis of the topic. Bring in psychological evidence and justify your view using psychology, not rumors or anecdotes.
- Independent, balanced judgment – go beyond the information presented by others. Be critical, seeing both strengths and weaknesses and support opinions with your own reasons.
- Attention to professional style and ethics. Quotes must have appropriate references. When paraphrasing you still MUST acknowledge the original work. As I wrote earlier, **plagiarism is a serious offense and will be addressed in accordance with the University policy.** If you have any questions at all regarding plagiarism, please contact me.
- Critical reading – are you evaluating strengths/weaknesses of the material you are reading? Are you being objective in your discussions of the material?
- On lateness – if you need an extension of time on an assignment please contact me well before the date when the assignment is due.
- You can use the following format for references to Chinn’s unpublished work:
Chinn, C. A. (2011). *Title of chapter*. Unpublished manuscript.

Rationale for the Course

As you will see from perusing the syllabus, this is a relatively demanding course. Why? One reason is that a highly influential book entitled *Academically Adrift* recently reported data from large national surveys indicating that education students do substantially less work in their courses than do students in other curricula. (If you look at graduate course syllabi in some of departments on campus, such as sociology, you may find substantially heavier reading loads than in most education courses.) I see this as a serious problem for the field of education. This can contribute to a perception by those outside education that a degree in the field of education is an “easier-to-get” degree. I am determined to do my part to ensure that this is not the case for students who have taken my classes--that we engage with exciting, interesting, challenging materials (at least I hope you will find them so!) that will put us at the top of our profession, and indeed any profession! I know that many of my Rutgers colleagues approach their classes in the same way.

In addition, this course meets certain requirements that are essential for meeting various accreditation requirements for programs to which this course contributes; our mission is to prepare people to be effective educators in a variety of settings. I have endeavored to design a course that can substantially enhance your professional competence in a variety of settings.

Netiquette

This is drawn from Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in cyberspace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 101. These are very useful guidelines for posting in an online class.

- a. Check the discussion frequently and respond appropriately and on the subject.
- b. Focus on one subject per message and use pertinent, informative, and subject titles that are not-too-long.
- c. Capitalize words only to highlight a point or for titles. Capitalizing otherwise is generally viewed as SHOUTING.
- d. Be professional and careful with your online interaction.
- e. Cite all quotes, references, and sources.
- f. It is inappropriate to forward someone else’s message(s) without their permission.
- g. Use humor carefully. The absence of face-to-face cues can cause humor to be misinterpreted as criticism or flaming (angry, antagonistic criticism). Feel free to use emoticons such as :-) or ;-) to let others know that you’re being humorous.

Norms for Discussion

This is an example of norms for participating in constructive controversies. Smith, K., Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (1981). Can conflict be constructive? Controversy versus concurrence seeking in learning groups. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 73, 651-663.

1. I am critical of ideas, not people.
2. I remember that we are all in this together.
3. I encourage everyone to participate.
4. I listen to everyone’s ideas, even if I do not agree with them.
5. I restate what someone has said if it is not clear.
6. I try to understand both sides of the issue.
7. I first bring out all the ideas, then I put them together.

Although obviously written for younger students, these norms work well for online discussions among adults, too. At the same time, however, let's add these norms:

Critical to the advance of knowledge are:

- a. Criticizing ideas, and having our ideas criticized by others.
- b. "Taking up" criticism.
- c. Exploring ideas without fully believing them, or without believing them at all.