



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

# EDU 822



## Advanced Psychology of Learning **Module 1**

# **EDU 822 Advanced Psychology of Learning Module I**

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## Module I

### Unit I The Concept Of Psychology

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#### 1.0 Introduction

Psychology as a branch of knowledge is devoted to the study of behaviour of human beings and animals. To this end, the relevance of psychology cannot be doubted, more importantly that the well trained teachers will need it to understand the behaviour of his/her students in relation to the learning process. Ability to understand various techniques of carrying out investigation in the field of psychology will equally assist the teachers in resolving emergent educational problems. All the points mentioned above are the focus of this unit.

#### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define psychology
- identify different methods of investigation in psychology.

#### 3.0 Main Content

##### 3.1 Definition of Psychology

Psychology affects every facet of our lives. A human being usually exhibits moods of joy and anger, have different learning ability and interact differently. When all these happen, we are eager in finding the circumstances that are surrounding these actions and make judgment in our own way. Psychology provides clues to these phenomena in a more scientific way.

Therefore Oladele (1998) describes psychology as a science subject which seeks to comprehend, predict and control the behaviour of man and lower animals. As the society is getting more complex, psychology assumes a vital position in solving human problems.

Psychologist uses scientific methods to understand why people behave the way they do and develop principles and theories about them. Psychology is premised on logical ways for knowing, explaining, controlling and improving behaviour.

Psychologists attempt to find answers to (a) how human beings and animals receive stimuli from their environment and their perceptions about such stimuli (b) how organisms learn and remember experiences (c) how they differ in their characteristics and (d) cope with various problems in life in order to understand the complex nature of organism and to contribute to better standard of living of organisms.

##### 3.2 Methods of Investigation in Psychology

The methods of investigation in psychology are highlighted below:

**Survey Method:** This is one of the most widely used techniques in psychology. It is a method of field observation. In this method, the researcher uses questionnaire or interview

to obtain data from his/her respondents. The survey method is very important because the questions that are asked can be very pertinent to genuine problems and the responses can be got from the persons affected by the problems. The problem of this method is that the respondents may be biased when giving their responses.

**Test Method:** Test is one of the methods used to elicit responses from the subjects. It is used to collect information about respondent's abilities, interests, attitudes and accomplishments.

We can use test to seek information from a large number of people within a short time. Test method is more objective and therefore provides accurate data than questionnaire or interview.

**Observational Method:** This is the careful study of human and animal's behaviour and record your findings simultaneously. In observing organism behaviour, the researcher needs to be highly skillful so that he/she can observe and record accurately in order to avoid subjective report. One of the disadvantages of this method is that the subject may decide not to show his/her true behaviour, if he/she knows that he/she is being studied.

**Experimental Method:** This is a method in which the investigator makes use of both the main and control subjects in his/her findings. In this case, the researcher attempts to give special treatment to the experimental subject or group. i.e. the organism which is being studied is taken to undergo certain laboratory procedures and conditions, while the control subject or group is not put under any special treatment or condition. It only provides a baseline against which to compare the experimental group.

**Case Histories Method:** This is a technique in which the researchers collect data about the respondents through the existing scientific biographies or case histories of the respondents. In this case, histories of the individual are critically looked into so as to find out about certain problem or behaviour in that person. This method is usually good in studying people with abnormal behaviour.

**Longitudinal Method:** This type of method makes the investigator to do an extensive study of the subject, through time, with measurements made at periodic intervals. This method does not depend upon the memories of those interviewed at a later date. The problem with the method is that if the respondent disappears or dies before the conclusion of the investigation, the investigator may not have a conclusive report.

### Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Define psychology
2. Why do we need to study psychology?
3. What are the functions of psychology?
4. Differentiate between:
  - Experimental and Longitudinal Methods.
  - Test and Survey Methods.
  - Observational and Case Histories Methods.
5. What advantages Experimental Method has over Observational Method?
6. Mention three data we can collect through test method.

## 4.0 Conclusion

This study has exposed the learner to the definition of psychology. It explains the importance of psychology to mankind. Effort was also made to explain various ways of investigating in psychology.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit, learners have learnt about:

- meaning of psychology
- methods of Investigation in psychology.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What do you understand by the term Psychology?
2. Discuss any five methods that Psychologists often adopt in their quest for knowledge?

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

Crowl, T.K., Kaminsky, & Podell, D.M., (1997). *Educational Psychology Windows on Teaching*. Chicago: Brown and Benchmark Publishers.

Hilgard, E.R., Atkinson, R.C., & Atkinson, R.L. (1971). *Introduction to Psychology*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.

Oladele, J.O. (1998). *Fundamentals of Psychological Foundations of Education*. Yaba: Johns-Lad Publishers Ltd.

## Unit 2 Branches of Psychology

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### 1.0 Introduction

Psychology is regarded as a science which studies human and animal behaviour. It studies different characteristics an organism can exhibit at a particular time or situation. Psychology attempts to study the people in relation to areas like social, education, physiological, genetics, environment and industrial settings.

### 2.0 objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify different branches of psychology
- discuss each of the branches of psychology
- explain their relevance to our society.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Branches of Psychology

Psychology is divided into several branches such as social, clinical, counselling, educational, developmental, industrial, sports, physiology, experimental, comparative, genetics, abnormal, environmental and engineering. These branches of psychology are explained below:

**Social Psychology:** This branch of Psychology is interested in the ways in which the behaviour of one affects others. It is the study of social behaviour and how they are influenced by the conditions in the society (Oladele, 1998). Social Psychology is about group or collective behaviour. Why does an individual conform to opinions of a group? What factors determine our judgment/impression of others? It studies the ways in which a person's thoughts, feeling and behaviour are influenced by that of other people. Hilgard, Altkinson and Altinson (1971) reveal that social learning is concerned with the behavioural processes, causal factors and results of interaction among persons and groups.

**Clinical Psychology:** This is the applied psychology that tries to use principles of knowledge in psychology to diagnose and treat emotional and behavioural problems. It uses the experiences gathered from developmental and abnormal psychology to determine the causative factors of a perceived problem. Psychologists in this field try to develop programmes of intervention that may assist the individual to overcome their emotional illness. A clinical Psychologist may work in places like hospital, juvenile court or practice privately.

**Counselling Psychology:** This is a field of Psychology typically used in the schools to give the students advice on problems of social adjustment, vocational/career or educational goals. The Psychologist assists the individual to discover his/her hidden or untapped talent in order to make use of this talent or resource effectively in solving personal problems. The counsellor changes the behaviour of his/her client through behaviour modification, modeling sensitization and rational thinking.



**Developmental Psychology:** Studies the process of human growth and the factors that are responsible for human behaviour from birth to the old age. This field of psychology seeks to find out the changes that take place during the individual's cognitive, physical, emotional, motor, personality and social development. The major focus of the developmental psychologists is children and adolescents.

**Educational Psychology:** Is an applied psychology which seeks to find solution to the problems associated with the teaching and learning in the classroom. It is a branch of psychology that attempts to find the fundamental laws of human behaviour and their applications to learning, Skinner (1953). Educational psychology is concerned with the curriculum planning, teacher-training and instruction design. It helps the learners and the teachers to optimally benefit in teaching-learning activities.

**Industrial Psychology/Organizational Psychology:** This psychology is described by Oladele (1998) as the sub-field that applies psychological knowledge to areas like personnel policies, working conditions, production efficiency and decision-making. The psychologists in this field are concerned with the labour enhancement. They help industries or other establishments in personnel selection, training, leadership and management.

Organizational psychology is closely related to industrial. It deals with team building, development of communication skills, goal setting or job designs.

**Sports Psychology:** This is a sub-field of psychology that tries to apply skills and knowledge in psychology to promote the efficiency of sports men and women. The sports psychologists work to develop programmes of intervention that may assist sports men and women to cope and adjust well in their psychomotor domain.

**Experimental Psychology:** The major concern of the psychologists in this regard is to adopt scientific methods (experiment) in investigating how people react to stimuli, perceive the world around them, learn, respond and are motivated to action. It deals with the study of fundamental psychological processes such as sensation, learning, motivation, emotion and memory.

**Comparative Psychology:** Comparative Psychologists make attempt to study the animals in order to compare the behaviour of different species. These set of psychologists investigate the abilities; needs and activities of different types of animals as compared with human beings.

**Genetics:** This is the psychology/ science of heredity, the science which deals with inherited attributes of an organism.

**Abnormal Psychology:** Deals with disruptive or behavioural disorder of individuals. The psychologists are interested in finding the causes of violent or behavioural problems or the treatment that can be adopted to tackle such emotional problems.

**Physiological Psychology:** Examines the relationship between the bodily processes and behaviour. This branch of psychology assesses the functions of different parts of the brain, how hormones affect individual's behaviour and the physical processes involved in learning and emotions.

**Environmental Psychology:** This is the application of psychological knowledge in finding the relationship that exists between human beings and the environment. The goal is to assist in environmental planning designing in order to save the environment.

### Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is the usefulness of Social Psychology to Educational Settings?
2. What is the major distinction between Educational Psychology and General Psychology?
3. Support the assertion that Educational Psychology applies the findings of General Psychology in solving educational problems.
4. Differentiate between Educational Psychology and Counselling Psychology.
5. What are the implications of Developmental Psychology to teaching/learning activities?
6. Why do we need to study psychology in schools?
7. Why is Experimental Psychology different from Comparative Psychology?

## 4.0 Conclusion

This unit has provided an insight into various branches of psychology. It has revealed the importance of each of the branches as a course of study.

## 5.0 Summary

Psychology, a social science course is like a mother with many children.

Some of the children given birth to are educational, social, genetics, clinical, counselling, abnormal, developmental, physiological, and environmental beings. Each has different features and functions it performs, but all adopt similar styles in carrying out their tasks.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Mention various branches of Psychology you know?
2. Explain various branches of Psychology?
3. Distinguish between Psychology and Counselling?

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

Crowl, T.K., Kaminsky, S., & Podell, D.M., (1997). *Educational Psychology Windows on Teaching*. Chicago: Brown and Benchmark Publishers.

Jon Mueller's, *Resources for the Teaching of Social Psychology and the Online Resources from the Social Science Information Gateway*. Downloaded on 20/09/2006.

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## Unit 3 Educational Psychology

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### 1.0 Introduction

The relevance of Educational Psychology in the classroom can not be over-emphasized. This is because a teacher who has skills and knowledge in psychology will be able to manage his/her classroom effectively. Besides, knowledge of psychology is a sine-quo-non to successful teaching-learning activities.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define educational psychology
- identify the importance of educational psychology to the classroom situation
- explain the meaning of psychology of learning.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 What Is Educational Psychology

Educational Psychology is an integral part of psychology which seeks to find how positive relationship/interaction can be established between the teacher, students and the learning process. According to Oladele (1998), educational psychology is an applied psychology which studies the ways in which the learner can be most effectively brought into contact with the learning process.

Educational psychology is geared towards investigating or exploring the factors that will stimulate, enhance or obstruct the learning process. The knowledge and skills acquired from educational psychology will guide and direct in resolving the enormous problems confronting both the teachers and students in the classroom.

#### 3.2 Implications of Educational Psychology to Classroom Situations

1. Educational Psychology allows the teacher to know the tone of his/her classroom. It assists the teacher to understand the behaviour of every member of his/her classroom.
2. It affords the teacher the opportunity to know the factors that can enhance or impede teaching-learning activities.
3. It helps the teacher to appreciate the importance of motivation, and how and when to motivate the students in the classroom.
4. It equips the teacher to know or be able to predict what might likely happen to a learner in terms of his/her personality, developmental stages and psychological problem.
5. It gives the teacher the opportunity of varying his/her instructional strategies based on the behaviour of the students in the classroom. It is a known fact that no particular instructional method is regarded as the best. The viability of any instructional method is based on learners' characteristics as well as the instructions to be delivered at a particular time.
6. Educational Psychology enables the teacher to understand the interest of the learners and how to follow this in planning the curriculum or learning contents.

7. It aids/guides the teacher in grading or placing the learners into a particular class. Feedback is an important aspect in the learning situation, a constant evaluation of students' performance will serve as a yardstick of measuring or assessing whether the students are responding positively to learning situation or there is a need for the teacher to adjust his/her teaching style.
8. Behavioural problem is an integral part of learning process. It is an undesirable act in the classroom. However, a teacher who is well trained will be able to explain why students behave irrationally at a particular time and how the teacher can tackle such problems without much harm to the classroom teaching/learning activities.
9. It also assists the teacher to assess his/her effectiveness. It is believed that teacher's effectiveness is measured based on the learners' performance in the classroom, hence, a teacher with good foundation in psychology will be able to judge his/her own efficiency and competency.

### 3.3 Psychology of Learning

Psychology of Learning provides necessary theoretical and empirical data regarding the learning process. It describes the principles of learning, motivation strategies, transfer of learning, memory, retention and forgetting. The interest in Psychology of Learning is not just in academic per se, but is useful in understanding the fundamental problems or emotional development motivation, social behaviour and personality of people.

### 3.4 Definition of Learning

Burns (1995) regards learning as a relatively permanent change in behaviour, which includes both observable activity and internal processes such as thinking, attitudes and emotions. Learning occurs right from the birth of the child and proceeds until he/she dies. Learning is acquired due to the prior experience one has gained. A child may learn from his/her environment (teacher) consciously or unconsciously, and in the process, his/her behaviour is being modified either negatively or positively. However, the essence of enrolling in the school by the students is to acquire desirable/positive behaviour under the tutelage of the teacher.

To this end, learning can be described as a process by which an individual:

- acquires a novel idea or experience to a situation;
- retains and applies the idea, skills and knowledge in solving the confronting problems.
- modify one's behaviour by the experience gained in the past and making the change permanent.

In view of the above points, learning is considered as:

- relatively permanent change in behaviour
- not just a visible but also a manifest responses of the learner
- modifying the learner's behaviour.
- being dependent on previously acquired experience.

Some behaviour cannot be described as being learnt because they occur at the moment of anatomical maturation. This type of learning occurs as one matures physically. For example,

a child does not learn how to walk, eat or talk but acquires these skills as he/she advances in age. This behaviour is regarded as “specie-specific behaviour” (Ayeeni, 1991).

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

1. What do you consider as the main objectives of Educational Psychology?
2. What is the major difference between Educational Psychology and Psychology of Learning?
3. Mention some of the components of Psychology of Learning
4. Differentiate between Learning and Education
5. Mention some of the qualities of good learning.

## **4.0 Conclusion**

In this unit learners have become acquainted with the meaning of educational psychology, its importance as well as the concept of psychology of learning. The motive behind this is to ensure the learners have foundation knowledge of educational psychology and learning before actually advancing in other concepts.

## **5.0 Summary**

Educational Psychology is an applied psychology which seeks to find and provide necessary solutions to problems confronting the teacher and his/her students in the classroom. The importance of educational psychology cannot be over emphasized.

Examples of its relevance are: to equip the teacher on how to tackle students disciplinary problems in the classroom, guide the teacher in the selection of the learning contents according to the students' cognitive capability, and to provide useful information about the differences among learners and how these can be taken care of so that every member of the class can benefit in the classroom activities. Psychology of Learning provides necessary theoretical and empirical data regarding the learning process.

## **6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise**

1. What do you understand by Educational Psychology?
2. What is the relevance of Psychology to the learning process?
3. Discuss the concept “Psychology of Learning”.

### **Seminar Topics**

Each student is expected to present seminar paper on some of the following topics:

1. Enumerate and discuss the four methods of investigation in Psychology.
2. Identify the branches of Psychology and explain their functions.

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

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