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**Introduction:**
Educational Psychology is a course that either excites people in education, or bores them silly! I happen to fall into the former group of people- and for good reason. Given the emphasis on accountability these days, teachers and school personnel are under increasing pressure to produce. As I’ve listened to people talk, the most often repeated concern is that of being held accountable for things that we have no control over. And this is where I get excited- because, I truly believe teachers tend to sell themselves short when it comes to their effectiveness. Its apparent to me that we have more control than we believe when it comes to how much our students learn.

The fields of education and of educational psychology have changed a great deal in the last few years. Direct Instruction and related teacher effectiveness research used to dominate the field. Then discovery learning, portfolio and performance based assessments and other humanistic strategies returned. Now, emphasis is being given to “back to the basics”- a fact that requires us, now, more than ever, to plan outcomes and teach purposefully, qualities that Slavin (2002) refers to as “teacher intentionality”. He goes on to say, “No one can deny that teachers matter or that teachers’ behaviors have a profound impact on student achievement. To make that impact positive, teachers must have both a deep understanding of the powerful principles of psychology as they apply to education, and a clear sense of how these principles can be applied…… Effective teaching is neither a bag of tricks nor a set of abstract principles rather, it is intelligent application of well-understood principles to address practical needs.”

I am excited to explore these principles together with you in this class, and hope that you will use this as an opportunity to stretch your understanding of how learning and teaching happens- in effect, to use it as an opportunity to extend your control over the process that threatens to undermine effective teaching.

**Course Description:**  C&I 510 is an advanced course that addresses application of psychological concepts in educational settings. The course will be organized around major themes that describe current views of learning. Students will gain an understanding of how these themes apply to instruction, assessment and human change.
Goals:

- Gain an understanding of the history of Educational Psychology and its place in professional education and explore some of the controversial issues in the field.
- Increase students’ understanding of current conceptions of how knowledge is acquired and represented. (How do children learn?)
- Increase students’ understanding of the principles of motivation applied in school settings.
- Increase students’ understanding of key concepts associated with transfer of learning.
- Explore the relationship between transfer of learning and current view of problem-solving and the acquisition of strategic behavior. (Metacognition: what do students think about their thinking?)
- Increase students’ ability to locate and apply educational psychology literature.

Texts:

Instructional Notes:

As I teach, I try to be aware of the special needs of individuals as well as the needs of the group. If you require some accommodation, please feel free to contact me to discuss assignments or the content of the course.

Course Activities:

Participation: (30% of final grade)
You will be asked to prepare for class sessions as well as to contribute in class activities and discussions. Class participation will be evaluated on the following:
- Consistent timely, and thoughtful contributions to discussion
- Completion of reading assignments;
- Appropriate contributions to small group activities (i.e. leading discussion, helping summarize information, etc.).

Common Article (30% of your final grade) The purpose of this assignment will be reflect on the kind of knowledge that is required of teachers in today’s classrooms, and to participate in an on-going discussion of this issue. You and a “reading buddy” will be asked to perform multiple reads of the following article: (I will make copies available to you) Details will follow.
Controversial Issues Paper and Presentation: (40% of your final grade) There are two phases to this assignment; a research paper and cyber presentation. Working in groups of three, you will choose, or be assigned a controversial issue in educational psychology. As partners, one of you will take the “pro” side of the issue, the other, the “con” side and the third will be in charge of the presentation and will lead the class discussion during your cyber presentation. Your task will be to thoroughly research the issue, and write a paper using APA style citing no fewer than 10 sources that adequately addresses both sides of the controversy (I know this will be a bit tricky, but I’d like this paper to reflect all three of your ideas- one paper will be submitted from all three of you). Your second task will be to prepare a debate-like presentation together with your partners that will be scheduled sometime during the last 4 weeks of class. (If none of these interest you and you have a better idea for an issue, let me know). You’ll have to determine how to divide the labor of this project equitably- as part of your evaluation, you will have the opportunity to confidentially assess your partners’ participation. However, if there are problems, I’d like to know about them ahead of time so that they can be addressed prior to the submission of the project.

Choose one of the following:

1. Is education better served by philosophy or science?
2. Is teaching (professional education) an anti-intellectual pursuit?
3. Is there a valid (viable) theory of instruction?
4. Should self-esteem be taught in the schools? (Should schools try to increase self-esteem?)
5. Do constructivist teaching methods, i.e., discovery based learning, cooperative learning, lead to higher achievement?
6. Should character education be taught in schools?
7. Should curricula reflect Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence?
8. Should instruction be matched to students’ learning styles?
9. Can teaching be atheoretical?
10. In order to bridge the achievement gap, a coherent national curriculum must be created and implemented.
11. Why is there an achievement gap between children of color and white children, and between children who live in lower socioeconomic conditions and those who live in higher socioeconomic conditions?
12. Can most students learn most of what is taught in school?