



A Study on The Contribution of Educational Psychology in Facilitating the Development and Learning of Adults

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ABSTRACT:

educational psychology promotes teaching and learning Psychologists working in the field of education study how people learn and retain knowledge. They apply psychological science to improve the learning process and promote educational success for all students. Educational psychology is the study of how people learn, including teaching methods, instructional processes, and individual differences in learning. It explores the cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and social influences on the learning process. Educational psychologists use this understanding of how people learn to develop instructional strategies and help students succeed in school.

Key words: educational psychology, adult learning, behavioural process, social influence, institutional strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Educational psychology is the study of how people learn, including teaching methods, instructional processes, and individual differences in learning. It explores the cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and social influences on the learning process. Educational psychologists use this understanding of how people learn to develop instructional strategies and help students succeed in school. Educational psychology is important because it has the potential to help both students and teachers. It provides important information for educators to help them create educational experiences, measure learning, and improve student motivation.

Psychologists working in the field of education study how people learn and retain knowledge. They apply psychological science to improve the learning process and promote educational success for all students

This branch of psychology focuses on the learning process of early childhood and adolescence. However, it also explores the social, emotional, and cognitive processes that are involved in learning throughout the entire lifespan.

The field of educational psychology incorporates a number of other disciplines, including developmental psychology, behavioural psychology, and cognitive psychology. Approaches to educational psychology include behavioural, developmental, cognitive, constructivist, and experiential perspectives.

According to Charles. E. Skinner, "Educational psychology deals with the behaviour of human beings in educational situations". Thus, educational psychology is a behavioural science with two main references– human behaviour and education. In the words of E.A. Peel, "Educational Psychology is the science of Education"

Perspectives in Educational Psychology

As with other areas of psychology, researchers within educational psychology tend to take on different perspectives when considering a problem. These perspectives focus on specific factors that influence learning, including learned behaviour's, cognition, experiences, and more.

➤ The Behavioural Perspective

This perspective suggests that all behaviours are learned through conditioning. Psychologists who take this perspective rely firmly on the principles of operant conditioning to explain how learning happens.¹

For example, teachers might reward learning by giving students tokens that can be exchanged for desirable items such as candy or toys. The behavioural perspective operates on the theory that students will learn when rewarded for "good" behaviour and punished for "bad" behaviour.

While such methods can be useful in some cases, the behavioural approach has been criticized for failing to account for attitudes, emotions, and intrinsic motivations for learning.

➤ The Developmental Perspective

This perspective focuses on how children acquire new skills and knowledge as they develop.² Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development is one example of an important developmental theory looking at how children grow intellectually.³

By understanding how children think at different stages of development, educational psychologists can better understand what children are capable of at each point of their growth. This can help educators create instructional methods and materials aimed at certain age groups.

➤ The Cognitive Perspective

The cognitive approach has become much more widespread, mainly because it accounts for how factors such as memories, beliefs, emotions, and motivations contribute to the learning process.⁴ This theory supports the idea that a person learns as a result of their own motivation, not as a result of external rewards.

Adult Learning:

a process in which adults engage in activities to master certain skills or gain a deeper understanding of certain ideas. Regardless of the particular learning theory, it is usually a self-directed process based on internal, rather than external, motivation (Staff, 2011, p. 1). The learning objectives are tailored to the students' current needs and goals. Each learner's experience provides a rich foundation for the acquisition of new skills, while simultaneously allowing the learner to change perceptions and gain new insights by altering his or her worldview. Overall, adult education is a multifaceted process that is individually tailored to the current needs of the learner. It engages existing skills to master new ones and encourages the learner to alter his or her present worldviews.

As adult learning has become increasingly significant in our modern world, various approaches have been devised for its purposes. In order to define adult education, however, it is crucial to consider certain points and characteristics of different methods.

Key Concepts

Internal motivation is one of the most critical concepts in adult education (Cranton, 2011, p. 53). It is related to the goals set by the learner, as well as the reasons why these goals have to be achieved. Understanding students' internal motivations provides the opportunity to adjust the learning process to their current needs and expectations.

The **problem-centred approach** is another crucial concept for adult education. The adult learning process is most efficient when it is focused on particular tasks to be performed and problems to be solved (Staff, 2011, p. 1). Therefore, it is important to provide learners with practical assignments in which they can directly apply both old and recently acquired skills.

Critical reflection, pertaining to the transformative method of learning, is of the utmost importance as well. Despite the fact that the students' experiences play a significant role in their studies, it is necessary to encourage the learners to question their existing beliefs and opinions, so that they can discover new perspectives. Gaining a deeper understanding of certain matters might at times require the adoption of an entirely different viewpoint, which is why the learner might need to rethink previous assumptions (Staff, 2011, p. 2).

The last key concept is the **empowerment** of adult learners. To yield better results, the learners need to feel responsible for their studies. This is why it is crucial to involve them in decision-making processes. This approach will increase the motivation to learn and help the learners gain confidence. Providing opportunity for discussion and encouraging all learners to air their opinions are important empowering methods as well (Cranton, 2011, p. 57).

Barriers of adult learning

- **Situational barriers:** arising from an adult's personal and family situation, such as time pressures and financial constraints.
- **Institutional barriers:** arising from the unresponsiveness of educational institutions or a lack of flexibility in the provision on offer, such as inappropriate scheduling or content of provision.
- **Dispositional barriers:** relating to the attitudes, perceptions and expectations of adults, such as believing that they are too old to learn or lacking confidence or interest.

One of the main challenges facing the education system in India is unequal access to education. Despite the country's rapid economic growth and increasing prosperity, many rural and underprivileged communities still lack access to quality education.

Common scenarios you might encounter while teaching adult learners

- They know everything. Of course, they don't, but they like to think they do.
- They are shy. Remarkably, even adults can be shy in the classroom.

- They don't want to use coursebooks.
- They don't have time.
- They have the weight of the world on their shoulders.

In dealing with adult groups, one must recognise the above characteristics. If an adult is motivated properly, he can put forth his maximum efforts to achieve the goal. The motivated behaviour is characterised by increased activity, willingness to work, overcoming resistance to achieve the goal, and learning new instrumentalities to achieve the goal.

RELEVANCE OF PSYCHOLOGY TO ADULT LEARNING

An adult educator should know the learner first before he tries to teach him. Unlike in formal education, the adult learners vary in age, needs, interests, attitudes and in their characteristics. So, it becomes all the more necessary to know their aspirations, attitudes, fears, frustrations, desires as well as the levels of achievement of individual learners. Unless the instructor is aware of the psychology of individual learner, his teaching or instruction would prove to be ineffective. Educational psychology explains how individuals differ and also how to plan individual instruction. It also explains the physiological principles of mental age, attention, learning, motivation and so on. A knowledge of physiological psychology is very useful for the adult educator.

The interpersonal relationships of the teacher and the adult learners play a significant role in teaching. Educational psychology deals with all aspects of personality. The mental health of the teachers and the learners also come under purview of Educational Psychology. The efficacy of reward and punishment is also revealed by a study of Educational Psychology. The formation of desirable habits, the sublimation of emotions and other adjustment problems are dealt by psychology.

The knowledge of Educational Psychology is essential for diagnostic and remedial teaching, measurement and evaluation. It describes the various tools of measurement and their use in finding out the levels of achievement of adult learners, their intelligence, attitudes, aptitudes and interests. All these are useful in guidance and counselling.

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