

What Is Educational Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes.

Educational psychology is the science of human behavior applied to the teaching and learning processes. Like general psychology, educational psychology is a science; therefore, its findings are generated through research that relies heavily on the scientific method. However, its purpose in study is to produce practical knowledge about educational settings and behaviors.

Educational psychology helps teachers understand issues such as how students learn, what motivates students to learn, how to design instruction that maximizes learning, and how to assess student learning and curricular effectiveness. It also can assist teachers to become more aware of their thoughts and actions and understand the effects these thoughts and actions have on others. (...) A teacher's job is very rewarding, but it is not without challenge. Educational psychology is intended to help teachers meet the challenges of the classroom and be more effective practitioners. Teachers wish to help students learn and understand subject matter ideas while simultaneously helping them feel good about themselves and about the experience of learning. Teachers also attempt to motivate students to want to learn; to do so, teachers must communicate with students and create the necessary experiences in order for students to learn. Teachers have to do all this in ways that make students feel positive about their attitudes or feelings toward learning as well as their capabilities as learners. A student's attitude or belief about the nature of knowledge and learning is referred to as a student's **epistemology**. To maximize student learning, teachers need knowledge and awareness, which are the products of studying human behavior and knowing what to do (and not do), what to look for, and where to look.

Reference: Tuckman, B. W. & Monetti, D. M. (2011) Educational psychology (pp. 5-6). Belmont (CA): Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.