

Psychology III ED221-3 - Mental Health

Instructor: Tiit Tammik

1975

Course Description:

This course is designed to give students an awareness of the nature of affective learning and teaching. The approach provides an opportunity for the student to develop self-awareness and skills in facilitating the development of childrens' self-concepts.

Goals:

1. To facilitate the students' development of insights regarding one's self and others as unique beings, with individual and basic human needs for self-actualization.
2. To develop a deeper and integrated understanding of human behaviour and motivation.
3. To develop interpersonal skills with which the student can facilitate the personal growth and positive self concept development of children.

Objectives:

1. To compare the different underlying assumptions and perspectives of theoretical approaches to understanding human nature and development.
2. To achieve a concept of persons as rationally and emotionally integrated beings.
3. To study the concept of "mental health" and the facilitation of a mentally healthy atmosphere in pre-school settings.
4. To study the dynamic interrelationship between affective and cognitive learning and methods for enhancing integrative human development.

Methods:

Learning will be facilitated by class and small group discussions; paired student observations of children; simulation gaming and role playing; student seminar research and presentation audio-visual and lecture presentations. In addition, students will develop a reading cards file of assigned readings and a "scrap book of course related articles on child study and mental health."

- Texts:
1. Moustakas, C. The Authentic Teacher, Howard A. Doyle 1966.
 2. Rogers, C. R. and Stevens, B. Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human. New York: Pocket Books, 1971
 3. "Learning and Mental Health in the School" Washington: ASCD Publications, 1966.
 4. Moustakas, C. Personal Growth: Cambridge: Howard A. Doyle, 1969.

NOTE: Text references as follows: PP, "Person to Person"; PG., "Personal Growth"; AT., "Authentic Teacher"; LMHS., "Learning and Mental Health in the School"; A few additional readings may be assigned during the course. An asterik following a page reference indicates that a "reading card" is required (ie., AT, 1-18*)

Syllabus :

A: 5 weeks, Sept. 8 to Oct. 8 Topics;

- philosophical assumptions underlying different theoretical approaches to understanding persons, interpersonal relationships and facilitating learning
- learning and mental health
- education and existential life
- authenticity in relationships
- affective and cognitive experiences in the classrooms
- the valuing process

Assigned Reading: AT, 1-34*, 37-58; PG, 1-26*

PP, 1-21*, 22-39; LMHS, 1-45*, 49-70*

Laing, R.D. "The Mystification of Experience", 57-64* (on reserve, library)

- assignment due, Sept. 15

B: 5 weeks, Oct. 15 to Nov. 12, Topics;

- developing sensitivity to the emotional expressions of children
- mental health approaches in the early elementary grades
- learning to be free; readiness to be
- self-actualization and education

Assigned Readings: AT, 59-109*, 110-156; PG, 38-46*;

PP, 40-62*; LMHS, 99-121*, 127-143.

- Mid-term test, Oct. 20th.

- C: 5 weeks, Nov. 17th to end of semester. Topics;
- the inner nature of man
 - essential conditions in the development of the self
 - creating authentic interpersonal relationships

Assigned Reading: AT, 224-260; PG, 66-78* PP, 183-193,
214-240*, 270-279*

- "scrap book", due Dec. 8.

Evaluation:

Class participation	10%
Reading Cards	30%
"Scrap book"	5%
Assignment	5%
Paired Observations	15%
Mid-term test	15%
Seminar research and presentation	20%

A grade of A, B, C or R, will be awarded.

Objectives, theory and methods of paired observations of children.

Objectives:

Accurate observations of children's behaviour, with the aim of consciously differentiating between that which you actually observe and that which you infer from the observed behaviour.

Theory:

The technique of paired observations can be useful in furthering the student's observation skills and understanding of children's behaviour. During the "objective observations" phase, the student views the children's behaviour objectively -- without projecting her own biases, values and attitudes into the situation. During the "subjective interpretations" phase, the student attempts to understand the meanings of the observed behaviour, thus enabling the observer to extend her interpretive thinking. This technique also enables two students to later discuss what they observed and to consider the possible reasons for agreement, disagreement, etc. of objective observations as well as subjective interpretations. This technique facilitates the development of a richer understanding of one's own and other's perceptions of children's behaviour, motivation and relationships.

Method:

Two students work together. They plan observation together and observe the same situation at the same time. On completion of their "objective observations" and "subjective interpretations", they compare notes, sharing each others perceptions, questioning and challenging each others accuracy and inferences when observations and/or interpretations differ.

Suggested Steps:

- 1) Discuss ahead of time with your partner the emphasis you want to make in your observations for that day.
- 2) You and your partner should both have watches, observation forms and pencils.

- 3) Decide together on which child (children) you will be observing. You will be observing the same situation and the same children at the same time.
- 4) Agree on length of time of observation -- 2 minutes for first observation and 4 minutes for second observation.
- 5) Make yourself as unobtrusive as possible when observing and do not initiate conversations with the children.
- 6) As soon as you have completed the "objective observations", and before discussing your observations with your partner, complete any additional comments on the "interpretation" side of your sheet.
- 7) Meet with your partner. Go to a place where you can sit together to share and compare your perceptions and notes carefully. Consider -- what you observed, that your partner did not.

Did you really see it or did you infer it? Discuss your observations fully, drawing on the ideas you have gained from your readings, class discussions and personal experiences.

While you were observing and interpreting the children's behaviour and later during your conversation with your partner, keep in mind such things as:

- aggressiveness
 - passivity
 - shyness
 - withdrawal
 - creativity
 - curiosity
 - conformity
 - fantasy play
 - feelings (i.e. sadness, anger, etc.
 - dependency
 - independence
 - enthusiasm (motivation)
 - consequences of behaviour
 - child-child relationship
 - child-group relationship
 - teacher-child relationship
- child's size and build etc. in relation to his activities.
-- any other aspects of behaviour, emotions, motivation, relationships, etc. that you feel are relevant.

- 8) Following your conversation with your partner, write a brief concluding report, discussing what you learned from the paired observation experience. This might include a consideration of various aspects of what you learned about --
- a) childrens' behaviour, motivation, emotions and relationships as well as
 - b) your philosophical assumptions, values, attitudes, feelings, perceptions (of yours, your partner's, the childrens') and
 - c) anything else that seemed meaningful and relevant to you.

SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS

OBJECTIVE OBSERVATIONS

PAIRED OBSERVATION NOTES PSY. III, ED 221-3.

Your name: _____

Ages of children _____
being observed : _____

Partner's name: _____

Observed for () minutes.

Brief description of setting and situation: _____

OBJECTIVE OBSERVATIONS

(what you actually observed)

SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS

(your interpretations from
observed behaviour)

OBJECTIVE OBSERVATIONS

SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS

Your name:

Partner's name:

Ages of children

being observed :

Observed for () minutes.

Brief description of setting and situation:

SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS
(your interpretations from
observed behaviour)

OBJECTIVE OBSERVATIONS
(what you actually observed)

MENTAL HEALTH

Mid-Term Test, Oct '75

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Note: Answer any three of the following questions--

- 1) What is the relationship between:
 - a. being aware of yourself (i.e. being cognitively and affectively integrated (or whole) and "in touch" with yourself) and
 - b. being able to communicate effectively with others and helping them to learn and develop as "authentic" individuals?

- 2) Jules Henry, in Laing's "The Politics of Experience", contends that, "education in practice has never been an instrument to free the mind and the spirit of man, but to bind them". Drawing on your own experiences and course related readings --
 - a. comment on Henry's contention and
 - b. describe the essential features of a school environment that would facilitate the process of freeing the minds and spirits of children in nursery and/or primary school settings.

- 3)
 - a. What does alienation mean and what kind of home and/or school related experiences might cause a child to begin to feel alienated?
 - b. What kind of experiences could you as a nursery school teacher provide for an alienated child to help them to develop in a more "mentally healthy" direction?

- 4) Moustakas in "The Authentic Teacher" states that, "self-values are in jeopardy in any climate where freedom and choice are denied, in any situation where the individual rejects his own senses and substitutes for his own perceptions the standards and expectations of others".

Comment on --

- a. the types of conditions and relationships that can lead to "self-betrayal" and
 - b. the conditions which help to create an "authentic" relationship and facilitate the personal growth of the individual.
- 5) Lawrence Kubie in "Learning and Mental Health in the School", observes that: "We have learned that both input-overload through the excessive use of grill and drill, and input-overload through excessive permissiveness may tumble the learner into precisely the same abyss (problem) of paralysis and ignorance..."

"How can we (as nursery school teachers) equip the child with the facts and the tools, which (s)he will need in life, without interfering with the freedom with which (s)he will be able to use them after (s)he has acquired them?"

Drawing on your personal experiences and course related readings, comment on this statement and respond to the question posed by Kubie.

