Welcome to Psychology 132A

Learning Problems, Schooling Problems: Policy and Practice

Description – Learning and schooling problems are explored in broad perspective as a basis for understanding their causes and different ways intervention is approached.

In the process, the topic of learning disabilities is explored initially, but only briefly and mainly to emphasize the degree of misdiagnosis and that LD is just one type of learning problem.

In general, the course stresses issues related to prevailing policies and practices and new directions for research, policy, practice, and training to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students.

Topics include:

• What is a Learning Disability?/Who should be called LD?/Who shouldn’t?
• Why are so many common learning problems misdiagnosed as LD?
• What is reciprocal determinism and what are some major implications of viewing learning problems from this paradigm?
• What role does assessment play in understanding and intervening with learning problems?
• What are the prevailing orientations to assessment and intervention for learning problems?
• School practice: What’s missing with respect to addressing learning problems?
• What is intrinsic motivation and how does it relate to extrinsic motivation?
• From the perspective of the full range of learning problems, what needs to be done differently in classrooms?
• What needs to be done differently throughout the school?
• What is the role of the community?
• How does school improvement policy need to be expanded to ensure development of a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students?
MATTERS TO CONSIDER IN FINALIZING YOUR DECISION TO ENROLL IN THIS CLASS

**WELCOME!** We want this to be a good learning experience for you and your classmates. The Teaching Assistant and I will do all we can to make this happen.

However, we know that learning is a reciprocally determined process. That is, it depends on positive transactions between teacher and learner and among learners. Thus, we need you to give serious consideration to the following matters before finalizing your enrollment in the class.

**First note:** This course covers the full range of learning problems -- not just Learning Disabilities. This is a time when our society is concerned about ensuring equity of opportunity for success at school of all students. In keeping with this, the course emphasizes the imperative for understanding a full range of learning and schooling problems.

As will be stressed, many people have learning problems; relatively few have true Learning Disabilities. This course discusses Learning Disabilities mainly to clarify where they fit as one type of learning problems.

All this means that, if you are only interested in Learning Disabilities, this course probably won’t be a good match for your interests.

**Second note:** The focus will be on discussing learning problems mostly in relation to K-12 policy and practice (with a bit on Pre-K and postsecondary education).

**Third note:** While this is a big class, small group discussion is a critical part of almost every class session. We view such discussions as an essential element of student learning. If you take this course, it is imperative that you plan to be

- at each class,
- on time,
- prepared to actively join in small group and whole class discussions.

So ... While we want every interested student to enroll -- PLEASE DON’T ENROLL UNLESS THE CONTENT FITS YOUR INTERESTS AND YOU WILL ATTEND EACH CLASS, COME ON TIME, AND WILL ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN GROUP AND CLASS DISCUSSIONS.

The reality is that students who enroll despite knowing the course content and processes are not a good match for them usually end up unhappy with the experience.

**Finally note:** If you do enroll, quickly identify one of more class members with whom you can compare notes and learn. Involved, cooperative group participation not only is important for enhancing your learning, but is meant to benefit everyone who participates in the discussion.
Part I: Learning problems, Schooling Problems: The current state of the art

1st Class What's the course about?

And a few words about our the national Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning website: [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu)

Before finalizing your enrollment, be certain you understand what this course is and isn’t about and that you are committed to coming to each class, on time, and will be prepared to join in the small group and class discussions.

2nd Class What is a Learning Disability? Who should be called LD? Who shouldn’t?

Points to be covered:
- LD: A label with wide appeal
- Name calling, labeling, & the classification of phenomena
- Diagnostic classification
- Bases, Processes, and biases related to differential diagnostic classification
  Group discussion along the way

3rd Class Why are so many common learning problems misdiagnosed as LD?

Points to be covered:
- Symptoms of learning disabilities as often shared with parents
- Causes and correlates: The problem of compelling correlates
- Paradigmatic models and etiological research on learning problems
- The federal definition for learning disabilities
  >>>>Group discussion (e.g., one possible question for the midterm)

4th Class Video on Learning Problems and Schooling

Class discussion of video

TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT SETTING UP A STUDY GROUP

5th, 6th, & 7th Classes What role does assessment play in understanding and intervening with learning problems?

Class activity and related discussion

Points to be covered:
- Demystifying assessment: Understanding the basics
  > Introductory activities
  > Basic concepts and purposes
  > Major Quality Control Concerns
  > Differential Diagnosis – the problem of assessing “Signs”
- Prevailing orientations to & Their Limitations for the Assessment and Treatment of Learning Problems
- Assessment, intervention, and ethical concerns
- The case of Alec
  > Group discussion as time allows (e.g., midterm questions)

ARE YOU IN A STUDY GROUP?
Part II. Expanding the Lenses Used to Understand Learning Problems and Improve How Schools Address Such Problems

8th Class
What are some major implications of viewing learning problems from a reciprocal determinism paradigm?

Points to be covered:
- Using a reciprocal determinist paradigm to clarify where learning disabilities fit into the broad range of learning problems seen in schools (Type I, II, and II learning problems)
- Helps overcome some biases
- Broadens understanding of barriers to learning and teaching
- Stresses viewing learning problems in the classroom from a transactional perspective

> Group discussion as time allows (e.g., midterm questions; study group???)

9th Class
VIDEO about ADHD

10th Class
Review for the Midterm

> Group discussion and Q & A related to mid-term study questions

11th Class
MIDTERM Exam -- 1 of the questions presented in class for group discussion; AND 1 previously unseen question

12th & 13th Class
School practice: What are the implications of a reciprocal deterministic paradigm for improving how schools address learning and related behavior problems?

Points to be covered:
- Additional lenses for looking at major gaps in school improvement policy and practice
- A fuller understanding of reciprocal determinism as it applies to learning, learning problems, and school intervention
  > Learning and the concept of the match
  > Learning problems as a function of mismatch
  > A few implications for intervention

REMINDER – RETURN YOUR MID-TERM EXAMS TO THE TA

14th & 15th Class
What is intrinsic motivation and how does it relate to extrinsic motivation?

Points to be covered:
- Engaging & Re-engaging Students Requires More Than Behavior Modification Strategies: Understanding of Intrinsic Motivation and Psychological Reactance is essential
  - A Brief Caution about Overreliance on Extrinsics
  - About Intervention Considerations in Engaging and Re-engaging Students

> Group discussion as time allows (e.g., questions for the final)
Part III. New Directions for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching

With the limitations of prevailing orientations in mind, the need is to move forward in both policy and practice to transform how schools approach learning and related behavior problems. Part III of the course focuses on understanding some of what’s needed.

16th Class

From the perspective of the full range of learning problems, what needs to be done differently in classrooms?

Points to be covered:
- A Sequential and Hierarchical Classroom Prototype
  >>Personalization then special assistance
  >>Levels of special assistance
- Implications for identifying Type I, II, and III learning problems
- About current policy and practice related to Response to Intervention (RTI)
- About focusing on motivation as a primary problem
  >Group discussion as time allows (e.g., questions for the final)

17th & 18th Class

What needs to be done differently school wide?

Points to be covered:
- What else should schools do to address barriers to learning and teaching & re-engage disconnected students?
- What district’s tend to do in addressing problems
- Marginalization in school improvement policy and practice
- Four fundamental and interrelated & interrelated areas of concern when efforts are made to make major systemic changes in public education
- About UCLA Center’s research on developing a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students
- Policy Revision -- Moving from a two to a three component policy and practice framework for school improvement
- Prototype for schoolwide system to address barriers to learning and re-engage disconnected students
- Prototype for leadership and operational infrastructure at schools to unify and develop a comprehensive system of learning supports

19th Class

Control, Choice, Consent

Points to be covered:
- Implications from understanding intrinsic motivation
- Revisiting socialization and helping interventions in schools

REMINDER – TURN IN YOUR SELF-EVALUATION AT THE LAST CLASS

20th Class

Summary and Concluding Comments and Activities

- Group focuses on study questions for the final to formulate any remaining questions
- Questions and answers and summary overview
- A few concluding remarks

REMINDER – TURN IN YOUR SELF-EVALUATION AT THE LAST CLASS

FINAL EXAM: as per schedule

- One of the questions presented in class for group discussion AND
- TWO essay questions not previously seen
Grading

**Your grade for the course** will reflect performance on (a) the midterm, (b) the final exam, and your *self-evaluation*.

Grades on the ESSAY exams will range from A-F, but will not be forced into a “normal” curve.

An *"A" grade is reserved for those whose responses are extremely well prepared and presented (clearly responsive to the question, comprehensive, and concise).* The midterm is weighted as 38% and the final is weighted as 57% of your course grade. The self-evaluation will be weighed in for the other 5%.

**Midterm:** consists of an essay response to *one* of 4-5 questions that will be presented in class over the first 5 weeks *and* another previously *unseen essay*. (Note that you will not be told ahead of time which of the 4-5 questions presented in class will be on the exam.) The two questions on the midterm will be weighted equally (each will account for 19% of the course grade).*

*For the midterm exam only: a grade of D or F can be raised to a C- by writing (at home) a *thorough* response to one of the other group discussion questions as assigned by the TA. If the response on this take home activity is not satisfactory, no change in grade will be made.*

**Final:** a comparable process will be used, except that there will be TWO previously *unseen essay* questions and *no make-ups* for a D or F grade.

That is, for the final:

1. as with the midterm, the first essay will be *one* of 4-5 questions that will be presented in class over the last half of the course; (It will account for 19% of the course grade.)
2. there will, however, be *two* previously unseen essay questions. (Each account for 19% and constitute 38% of the course grade.)*

*These two questions will try to assess how well you learned the “big picture” *over the entire 10 weeks of the course.*

**Self-Evaluation:** You will do your self-evaluation (using the form provided) and turn it in at the last class. This will account for 5% of your grade.

**FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE ACCESS TO COURSE EXAM FILES, PLEASE NOTE THAT BECAUSE OF THE CHANGES IN THE COURSE, EXAM QUESTIONS WILL DIFFER FROM PAST QUARTERS.**
Assigned Reading – Psychology 132A

All readings are online for free and ready access.

As a preamble to the course:

• **Read:** Class in the classroom: The Income Gap and NYC's Schools –

• **Browse** Berliner’s article – *Our impoverished view of educational reform. Analysis of the role of poverty in school reform.* Online at – [http://www.tcrecord.org/PrintContent.asp?ContentID=12106](http://www.tcrecord.org/PrintContent.asp?ContentID=12106) (accessible through the university’s library subscription)

During the First week:

• **Browse** the resources on the website for the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports. Go to [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu) (start by clicking on the home page button labeled *First Visit* and get a sense of the many features; then look at the range of topics listed for the Online Clearinghouse *Quick Finds* – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/quicksearch.htm)

• **Read material on Learning Disabilities:**
  >Chapter 1 and Appendix A. From *Revisiting Learning and Behavior Problems* –

Second week: *Read about barriers to learning and reciprocal determinism*

• **Read:**
  >In *Overview of Social Cognitive Theory and of Self-Efficacy* -- read first section on reciprocal determinism – [http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/eff.html](http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/eff.html)

Third Week: *About assessment’s role in understanding and intervening with learning problems*

• **Read:**
  >Chapter 4 – and two brief readings, Reading I.2 and Reading II.2. From *Learning problems and learning disabilities*. Online at [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/psych132/](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/psych132/)

As a possible future resource, just **browse** online: *Assessing to address barriers to learning* (intro packet from the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports – [http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriers/barriers.pdf](http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriers/barriers.pdf))

Fourth Week: About prevailing orientations to assessment and intervention for learning problems

• **Read** in *On understanding intervention in psychology & education:*
  >Contrasting Orientations, pp. 69-73
  >Models of Teaching, pp. 73-74
  >Eclecticism: the Ongoing Search for Better Practices, pp. 74-75

Fifth Week – Review all the above readings and what was presented in lecture for Midterm

• **Use Office Hours and opportunities in class to ask for clarifications of material in the readings and class presentations**
Sixth Week: School practice: What’s missing with respect to addressing learning problems?

• Read:
  >Chapter 2. “Good Schools” In Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf

Seventh Week: What is intrinsic motivation and how does it relate to extrinsic motivation?

• Read:
  >”Reactance” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reactance_(psychology)

For those interested in learning more about Deci, et al.’s work on intrinsic motivation, see

>When rewards compete with nature: The undermining of intrinsic motivation (e.g., browse “Extrinsic Rewards and Intrinsic Motivation in Education: Reconsidered Once Again,” Review of Educational Research (2001) online at http://rer.sagepub.com/content/71/1/1.full.pdf+html )
>Intrinsic Motivation, Student Engagement, and the Work of Deci and Ryan http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/decinforesource.pdf
>About Intrinsic Motivation from the Perspective of Self-determination Theory http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/selfdeter.pdf
>Deci has a 14 minute Youtube presentation at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGrcets0E6I#t=19
>>Do a Google Search on the topic: Motivating Students to Learn and use what you’ve learned in this course to analyze what’s discussed and recommended; see also the Center for Mental Health in School’s Quick Find on Motivation – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/motiv.htm

Eighth Week: From the perspective of the full range of learning problems, what needs to be done differently in classrooms?

• Read: Chapters 3 and 4 In Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf
Also browse the Appendix on “Active, Engaged Learning Practices” In Improving School Improvement – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/improve.pdf
Ninth Week: What needs to be done differently outside the classroom?

>Read:
  >Chapter 7 in the online course textbook: Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/barriersbook.pdf
  >Browse the set of surveys covering the content arenas of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system of learning supports – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/surveys/set1.pdf

Some Online Enrichment Reading

  >Easing the impact of student mobility: Welcoming & social support – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/easimp.htm

Tenth Week: How does school improvement policy need to be expanded to ensure development of a comprehensive system of learning supports?

  • Read:
    >”Concluding Comments” In Improving School Improvement – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/improve.pdf

Some Other References of Relevance and Interest

Obviously, there is a great deal of relevant and interesting literature. If you want recommendations, see the instructor.

If you are looking for information on a specific topic, see the Quick Find Online Clearinghouse search menu on the website for the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/websrch.htm
At the end of the quarter, you will be asked to fill out the following.

You will **turn it in at the last class**.

Turning in a completed self-evaluation is 5% of your grade.

**Self-Evaluation -- How Well Did You Contribute to Your Own Learning and to What Others Learned in this Class?**

Name: ________________________________

As this course emphasizes, learning in class is a reciprocally determined process. This is designed to focus you in on your role in the process during the quarter.

Circle Answers –

1. **Class Attendance**
   How many of the 30 class “hours” (3 hours per week) did you attend?
   - Less than 21
   - 22-24
   - 25-27
   - 28-29
   - All

2. **Class Participation**
   (a) During class, what percentage of the time did you contribute to the academic **interchange** during **group** discussions?
      - Less than 5%
      - 6-15%
      - 16-25%
      - 26-40%
      - 41-60%
      - 61-75%
      - 76-90%
      - 91-100%
   (b) During class, what percentage of the time did you contribute to the academic **interchange** during **whole** class discussions?
      - Less than 5%
      - 6-15%
      - 16-25%
      - 26-40%
      - 41-60%
      - 61-80%
      - Over 81%

3. **Assigned Readings**
   What percentage of the assigned readings did you actually read?
   - None
   - 1-10%
   - 11-25%
   - 26-40%
   - 41-60%
   - 61-75%
   - 76-90%
   - Over 90%

4. **Your Overall Contribution to Your Own Learning and to What Others Learned in this Class**
   (a) How well did you contribute to **maximizing** your own learning over the quarter in this class?
      - Not at all Well
      - Not too Well
      - Well
      - Very well
   (b) How well did you contribute to the learning of others in the class?
      - Not at all Well
      - Not too Well
      - Well
      - Very well