

Course Information: Educational Psychology (Education 215) – Cornell College

Type: Field Experience Paper

Professor Kerry Bostwick and Consulting Librarian Jean Donham.

Level: 200

The course is required for both the elementary and secondary teacher certification programs. Students are required to observe in an assigned classroom for two days where they take field notes. The librarian provides a workshop before the two observation days so that students can read the research literature in advance.

Block Plan Context:

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1							
2							
3							
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Important Features of the Assignment:

- The **Block Plan** facilitates observations in a local area school for two full days and allows students to focus specifically on the assignment. The lengthy observance also allows students to address different aspects of educational psychology.
- The emphasis on relating theory to the observed practice challenges students to **integrate information** from secondary sources and primary sources (their field notes) and to **think critically** about their own experiences in relation to the literature and the discipline.
- The use of students’ observations **discourages plagiarism**.
- The assignment gives future teachers the opportunity to participate as practitioner-researchers in the **discipline** of education.
- Students benefit from the **expertise** of a librarian in searching the research literature.

Description of Assignment:

Students present a School Observation Paper following their observations in the public schools, which is due at the end of week 2. The paper consists of four parts. The description of the four parts as detailed to the students is listed below.

Part I

- A description of the physical environment of the school. When discussing the physical environment, articulate your feelings or first impression upon returning to a K-12 public school.
- Describe the student you shadowed in great detail, but change the student’s name for confidentiality purposes.
- Provide detailed commentary and support as to where you *believe* your student to be in relation to Piaget’s theory of cognitive development, and Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development or Kohlberg’s stages of moral development or Gilligan’s “ethic of care.”

Part II

- How students were kept “on-task”
- Motivational issues

- Teacher accommodation of instruction to meet individual needs
- How students were assessed (also, were they told in advance the expectations)
- Attitude(s) expressed by the teacher(s) to students
- Attitude(s) expressed by the students to the teacher(s)
- In your opinion, were the assignments (daily work) interesting
- Discuss the learning environment
- Organization of the classroom
- Classroom duties.

Part III

- Discuss gender issues:
 - Did the teacher call on males and females equally? Did the teacher have a system?
 - How did the males and females interact with each other?
- Discuss your observation of Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism or Bandura’s (behavioral theory) Social Cognitive Theory of Learning in the elementary or secondary classroom.
- Discuss the teacher’s method or methods of instruction relating to Vygotsky or Bandura (as you observed) and discuss the students’ reactions to the teaching method you observed.

Part IV

- Conclusion of your paper to include: 1) discuss the most valuable lesson you learned as a result of these two observation days in the schools; 2) discuss your personal comments about the observations (elementary or secondary) and its relevance to you as a potential public school teacher, coach, parent, or human.

Timeline:

Wk	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Weekend</i>
1					Instruction session with librarian: selecting and searching relevant databases; scholarly sources.	
2		Observation in school.	Observation in school.		Paper due.	