ED 736
Atypical Cognitive and Social Development
Prof. Addison Stone
Friday 9-12 Room 2232

Office hours: By appointment
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Course Objectives:

1. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of alternative theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing atypical patterns of development.
2. Familiarity with major research findings regarding atypical patterns of cognitive and social development.
3. Analysis of research related to the impact of atypical development on informal and formal learning activities, and vice versa.
4. Development of a personal perspective regarding the causes and consequences of atypical development.

Course Format:

The course will be a combination of lectures and discussion. Lectures will highlight issues cutting across the readings and/or introducing issues/research findings that supplement the readings. Discussions will focus on analysis of selected readings from theoretical and/or methodological angles. Emphasis will be placed on the development of a critical appraisal of current assumptions and knowledge regarding atypical development and its implications for children’s school success.

Course Readings:

Gallimore, R, et al. (Eds.), *Developmental perspectives on children with high-incidence disabilities*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assocs
Course packet at Excel copies.

Course Requirements:

1. Critical analysis of assigned readings prior to associated course meeting and active participation in class discussions. (25%)
2. Occasional essays (5 total, each 2-3 pages) focused on issues raised in the assigned readings. (30%)
3. Research review (approx. 20 pages) on a topic of relevance to the course (35%). The paper topic must be approved in advance. The paper can take the form of either:
   - An analysis of what is known about the status of a single aspect of cognitive or social development within a specific atypical population (e.g., theory of mind in children with autism; semantic organization in children with specific language impairment) OR
• An analysis of theory and research on the social interactional origins and/or impact of a specific cognitive or social deficiency (e.g., the role of maternal depression in atypical attachment patterns; impact of language disorders on classroom engagement).

In either case, the paper should include a comprehensive summary and critical analysis of the relevant literature, and it should conclude with an analysis of the current state of knowledge, along with a brief characterization of the type of research needed to push our understanding further along.

4. Class presentation and discussion based on the topic of your term paper (10%)
UNIT I: FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES IN CONCEPTUALIZING ATYPICAL DEVELOPMENT

In this unit, we will explore major paradigms that have been used in conceptualizing and studying atypical cognitive and social development. These paradigms include: Constructivism, Information Processing, Socioculturalism, (Social) Learning Theory, and Bioadaptation. In addition, we will consider societal expectations regarding 'typicality' and the role of social institutions in identifying and responding to atypical developmental patterns.

Week 1: Preliminary Issues

Overview of the course & participant responsibilities
Theories of development as normative frameworks
Atypicality as a statistical heuristic and as a value judgment
Exceptionality categories as natural syndromes and as necessities for policy and practice

Week 2: Frameworks for the Study of Cognitive and Social Development: Metaphors, Mechanisms, and Milestones

Miller, P. H. (2002). Chapters on constructivism, information processing, and sociocultural theory. In Theories of developmental psychology

Week 3: Frameworks (cont'd)


Week 4: Developmental Expectations and Atypicality

[Issues of normative and 'age-graded' expectations, readiness, deficit, compensation]

UNIT II: MANIFESTATIONS OF ATYPICAL COGNITIVE & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In this unit, we will review major research that has identified atypical cognitive and social behaviors at major points in the lifespan. Included will be issues related to perceptual organization, memory, concepts of physical and social causality, problem-solving, formation of social relationships, self-awareness and self-regulation, and social inferencing.

Week 5: Infancy
[Auditory & visual perceptual organization; Causality and person perception; Parent-child interactional synchrony]


Week 6: Early Childhood 1
[Attachment: Patterns and implications; Representational systems; Early concepts; Activity level & temperament]


Week 7: Early Childhood 2
[Social comparison and self-concept; Peer relationships and collaboration; Self-regulation of attention and memory]


Week 8: Late Childhood and Adolescence
[Metacognition; Social inferencing and stereotyping; Identity and future orientation; Theory-spinning and experimentation; Peer culture]


UNIT III: ATYPICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS

In this unit, we review research on the impact of specific atypical developmental patterns on a child's ability to respond appropriately to social expectations in everyday and formal learning settings.

Week 9: Social Engagement Challenges In and Out of School
[Establishing productive family & peer relations]

To appear in B.Y.L. Wong & M. Donahue (Eds.), The social dimensions of learning disabilities. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assocs.


Week 10: Social Engagement Challenges In and Out of School (cont’d)

[Cooperative learning groups; Classroom engagement (participation structures; teacher-child interactions]


Week 11: Learning Challenges in Formal Educational Settings

[Mastering basic literacy skills and practices; Phonological awareness and reading; Lexical access, reading and math]


Week 12: Learning Challenges in Formal Educational Settings (cont'd)

Self-organization & learning (study skills, learning strategies, comprehension strategies); Mastering content knowledge; Semantic networks; Memorization processes


Week 13: Implications for Prevention and Intervention


