

MEANING AND SCOPE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

The word, '**Psychology**' is derived from two Greek words, '**Psyche**' and '**Logos**'. Psyche means '**soul**' and 'Logos' means '**science**'. Thus psychology was first defined as the 'science of soul'.

According to earlier psychologists, the function of psychology was to study the nature, origin and destiny of the human soul. But soul is something metaphysical. It cannot be seen, observed and touched and we cannot make scientific experiments on soul.

In the 18th century, psychology was understood as the '**Science of Mind**'. William James (1892) defined psychology as the science of mental processes. But the word 'mind' is also quite ambiguous as there was confusion regarding the nature and functions of mind.

Modern psychologists defined psychology as the "**Science of Consciousness**". James Sully (1884) defined psychology as the "**Science of the Inner World**". Wilhelm Wundt (1892) defined psychology as the science which studies the "internal experiences". But there are three levels of consciousness – conscious, subconscious and the unconscious and so this definition also was not accepted by some.

Thus psychology first lost its soul, then its mind and then its consciousness. At present only its behaviour exists. **William McDugall** (1905) defined psychology as the "**Science of Behaviour**", W.B. Pillsbury (1911) and J.B. Watson (1912) also defined psychology as the science of behavior.

Behaviour generally means overt activities which can be observed and measured scientifically. But one's behaviour is always influenced by his experiences. So when we study one's behaviour we must also study his experiences.

Psychology should, therefore, be defined as a "science of behaviour and experiences on human beings" -**B.F. Skinner**

According to **Crow and Crow**, "Psychology is the study of human behaviour and human relationship".

WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Educational psychology is that branch of psychology in which the findings of psychology are applied in the field of education. It is the scientific study of human behaviour in educational setting.

According to Charles. E. Skinner, “Educational psychology deals with the behaviour of human beings in educational situations”.

Thus educational psychology is a behavioural science with two main references– human behaviour and education.

In the words of E.A. Peel, “Educational Psychology is the science of Education”.

Education by all means is an attempt to mould and shape the behaviour of the pupil. It aims to produce desirable changes in him for the all-round development of his personality.

The essential knowledge and skill to do this job satisfactorily is supplied by Educational Psychology. In the words of E.A. Peel, “Educational psychology helps the teacher to understand the development of his pupils, the range and limits of their capacities, the processes by which they learn and their social relationships.”

In this way, the work of the Educational Psychologists resembles with that of an Engineer, who is a technical expert. The Engineer supplies all the knowledge and skill essential for the accomplishment of the job satisfactorily... for example, construction of a bridge.

In the same way Educational Psychologists, who is a technical expert in the field of Education, supplies all the information, principles and techniques essential for understanding the behaviour of the pupil in response to educational environment and desired modification of his behaviour to bring an all-round development of his personality.

In this way, it is quite reasonable to call Educational Psychology as a science and technology of Education.

Thus, Educational Psychology concerned primarily with understanding the processes of teaching and learning that take place within formal environments and developing ways of improving those methods. It covers important topics like learning theories; teaching methods; motivation; cognitive, emotional, and moral development; and parent-child relationships etc.

In short, it is the scientific discipline that addresses the questions: “Why do some students learn more than others?” and “What can be done to improve that learning?”

W.A. Kelly (1941) listed the nature of Educational Psychology as follows:

- i. To give a knowledge of the nature of the child
- ii. To give understanding of the nature, aims and purposes of education
- iii. To give understanding of the scientific methods and procedures which have been used in arriving at the facts and principles of educational psychology
- iv. To present the principles and techniques of learning and teaching
- v. To give training in methods of measuring abilities and achievement in school subjects
- vi. To give a knowledge of the growth and development of children
- vii. To assist in the better adjustment of children and to help them to prevent maladjustment
- viii. To study the educational significance and control of emotions
- ix. To give an understanding of the principles and techniques of correct training

Thus, educational psychology is an applied, positive, social, specific and practical science. While general science deals with behaviour of the individuals in various spheres, educational psychology studies the behaviour of the individual in educational sphere only.

SCOPE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

The scope of educational psychology is ever-growing due to constantly researches in this field. The following factors will indicate the scope of educational psychology:

1. **The Learner.** The subject-matter of educational psychology is knitted around the learner. Therefore, the need of knowing the learner and the techniques of knowing him well. The topics include – the innate abilities and capacities of the individuals, individual differences and their measurements, the overt, covert, conscious as well as unconscious behaviour of the learner, the characteristics of his growth and development and each stage beginning from childhood to adulthood.

2. **The Learning Experiences.** Educational Psychology helps in deciding what learning experiences are desirable, at what stage of the growth and development of the learner, so that these experiences can be acquired with a greater ease and satisfaction.

3. **Learning process:** After knowing the learner and deciding what learning experiences are to be provided, Educational Psychology moves on to the laws, principles and theories of learning. Other items in the learning process are remembering and forgetting, perceiving, concept formation, thinking and reasoning, problem solving, transfer of learning, ways and means of effective learning etc.

4. **Learning Situation or Environment.** Here we deal with the environmental factors and learning situations which come midway between the learner and the teacher. Topics like classroom climate and group dynamics, techniques and aids that facilitate learning and evaluation, techniques and practices, guidance and counselling etc. For the smooth functioning of the teaching-learning process.

5. **The Teacher:** The teacher is a potent force in any scheme of teaching and learning process. It discusses the role of the teacher. It emphasizes the need of '**knowing thyself**' for a teacher to play his role properly in the process of education. His conflicts, motivation. Anxiety, adjustment, level of aspiration etc. It throws light on the essential personality traits, interests, aptitudes, the characteristics of effective teaching etc so as to inspire him for becoming a successful teacher.

Though the entire scope of Educational Psychology is included in the above mentioned five key-factors, it may be further expanded by adding the following:

6. It studies **Human Behaviour** in educational situations. Psychology is the study of behaviour, and education deals with the modification of behaviour; hence, educational psychology pervades the whole field of education.

7. It studies the **Growth and Development** of the child. How a child passes through the various stages of growth and what are the characteristics of each stage are included in the study of educational psychology.

8. To what extent **Heredity and Environment** contribute towards the growth of the individual, and how this knowledge can be made use of for bringing about the optimum development of the child; form a salient feature of the scope of educational psychology.

9. Educational psychology deals with the **Nature and Development of the Personality** of an individual. In fact, education has been defined as the all-round development of the personality of an individual; personality development also implies a well-adjusted personality.

10. It studies **Individual Difference**: Every individual differs from every other individual. It is one of the fundamental facts of human nature which have been brought to light by educational psychology. This one fact has revolutionalised the concept and process of education.

11. It studies the nature **Intelligence and its Measurement**. This is of utmost importance for a teacher.

12. It Provides **Guidance and Counseling**: Education is nothing but providing guidance to the growing child.

Conclusion: We can conclude by saying that Educational Psychology is narrower in scope than general psychology. While general psychology deals with the behaviour of the individual in a general way, educational psychology is concerned with the behaviour of the learner in an educational setting.

KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY HELPS THE TEACHER IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS

Educational psychology has contributed considerably to the creation of the modern system of education. The knowledge of educational psychology helps the teacher in the following ways:

1. To understand the Stages of Development: Psychology has clearly shown that human life passes through different stages of development before it reaches adulthood. They are infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Psychologists have also thoroughly studied the characteristic behaviour patterns in these different periods of life. Identification of these periods with different sets of characteristics and attributes as regards physical, mental and emotional development greatly help educationists to design curriculum and determine appropriate methods of teaching for students at different stages.

2. To Know the Learner: The child or the learner is the key factor in the teaching-learning process. Educational psychology helps the teacher to know his interests, attitudes, aptitudes and the other acquired or innate capacities and abilities; to know the stage of development linked with his social, emotional, intellectual, physical and aesthetic needs; to know his level

of aspiration, his conscious and unconscious behaviour; his motivational and group behaviour; his conflicts, desires and other aspects of his mental health. So that perfect guidance and help can be provided and positive attitude towards the learner can be formed.

3. To Understand the Nature of Classroom Learning: Educational Psychology helps the teacher to adapt and adjust his teaching according to the level of the learners. A teacher is teaching in a class but a large number of students do not understand the subject-matter which is being taught. To deal with the students effectively in the class the teacher must have the knowledge of the various approaches to the learning process, principles, laws and factors affecting it then only he/she can apply remedial measures in the learning situation.

4. To Understand the Individual Differences: No two persons are exactly alike. Pupils differ in their level of intelligence, aptitudes, likes and dislikes and in other propensities and potentialities. There are gifted, backward, physically and mentally challenged children. Thus, psychology tells the teacher about the individual differences among the students in the class and the procedure, methodology and techniques to be adopted for them.

5. To Solve Classroom Problems: There are innumerable problems like truancy, bullying, peer pressure, ethnic tensions, cheating in tests etc. Educational Psychology helps to equip the teacher by studying the characteristics of the problem children, the dynamics of the group, behavioral characteristics and adjustments.

6. To develop Necessary Skills and Interest in Teaching: Educational psychology helps the teacher to acquire and develop necessary qualities and skills to deal with the problems created by the pupils, maintain a healthy atmosphere in the classroom and show concern regarding the progress of the child.

7. To Understand Effective Methods of Teaching: Educational Psychology has discovered several new approaches, principles, methods and techniques of teaching which are very helpful in today's teaching-learning process. Educational psychology tells us how significant play and recreation are for the children and how play-way methods turn learning into an interesting task.

8. To Understand the Influence of Heredity and Environment on the Child: Educational psychology helps the teacher to know that the child is the product of heredity and environment. They are the two sides of a coin. Both play a prominent part in the all-round

development of the child. While the child is born with a number of hereditary qualities, environment helps them to be modified according to the requirements of the society.

9. To Understand the Mental Health of the Child: Educational Psychology helps the teacher to know what are the factors responsible for the mental ill-health and maladjustment of a student and to suggest improvement thereof. Besides this, it also provides the teacher with necessary insight to improve his own mental status to cope up with the situation.

10. To Understand the Procedure of Curriculum Construction: Curriculum is an integral part of the teaching-learning process. Curriculum should be child-centred and fulfil the motives and psychological needs of the individual because child capacities differ from stage to stage. Educational psychology helps the teacher to suggest ways and means to curriculum framers to prepare sound and balanced curriculum for the children.

11. To Provide Guidance and Counselling: Today guidance to a child at every stage of life is needed because psychological abilities, interests and learning styles differ from person to person. Similarly, what courses of study the child should undertake in future is also a vital question. All these can be answered well if the teacher knows the psychology of children.

12. To Understand Principles of Evaluation and Assessment: Evaluation is an integral part of the teaching-learning process. How to test the potentialities of the child depends upon the evaluation techniques. The development of the different types of psychological tests for the evaluation of the individual is a distinct contribution of educational psychology.

13. To inculcate Positive and Creative Discipline: The slogan of the traditional teachers was “spare the rod and spoil the child.” Flogging the child was the chief instrument. Educational Psychology has replaced the repressive system with the preventive system. Now teachers adopt a cooperative and scientific approach to modify the behaviour of the students. Emphasis is laid on self-discipline through creative and constructive activities.

14. Educational Psychology and Research: Educational psychologists conduct research to improve the behaviour of human beings in the educational situation. For this purpose it helps in developing tools and devices to measure the performance and suggest remedial measures thereof.

15. To Know Himself/Herself: Educational Psychology helps the teacher to know about himself/herself. His/her own behaviour pattern, personality characteristics, likes and dislikes,

motivation, anxiety, conflicts, adjustment etc. All this knowledge helps him in growing as a successful teacher.

16. **Educational Psychology Helps in Professional Growth, Changing Attitude and**

Innovative Thinking: Inside the classroom, educational psychology has enabled the teacher to achieve proper conditioning of pupils by achieving and directing classroom programmes on human lives. Not only this, educational psychologists are busy in finding out innovations in the field of education. These innovations will bring about professional growth of the teacher.

Conclusion: We can say that educational psychology has contributed considerably to the creation of the modern system of education. In teaching, we are dealing with three elements – the teacher, the student, and the subject. It has helped teachers, headmasters, administrators, inspectors, guidance and counseling workers, social workers to significantly develop an impartial and sympathetic attitude towards children and form them into integrated personalities.