

Education Majors' Attitudes Toward Educational Psychology

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Introduction

- College students who have chosen to major in Education often fail to see the relevance of psychology to their future teaching career
- Educational Psychology provides preservice teachers with diverse content knowledge such as behavior management, cognition, motivation, social/personal development, and learner differences
- Our goal was to examine student attitudes about Educational Psychology and provide empirical data that supports its use in the teacher training curriculum at ISU

Research Questions and Hypotheses

- Does a semester of Educational Psychology influence that attitudes and beliefs of preservice teachers?
- H1: Students' attitudes will be more positive at the end of the semester, as compared to the beginning of the semester
- H2: Students overall assessment of psychology's relevance may not change, but specific topics will be viewed as more important to for their future careers

Method

- **Participants** (N = 77; 48.2% female)
 - 50.6% sophomore; 49.4% junior/senior
 - Secondary Education majors (n = 61)
 - Special Education majors (n = 16)

Method (cont.)

- **Instruments**
 - General attitudes about *Educational Psychology*
 - Ratings of the importance of 49 specific topics covered in the course
 - Open-ended questions
 - Demographics

Results

Attitudes about EdPsych

- Attitudes were generally positive about the importance of psychology to a career in teaching
- However, students were somewhat ambivalent, indicating that they might prefer to take a different psychology course while at the same time agreeing it should be required (Fig 1)

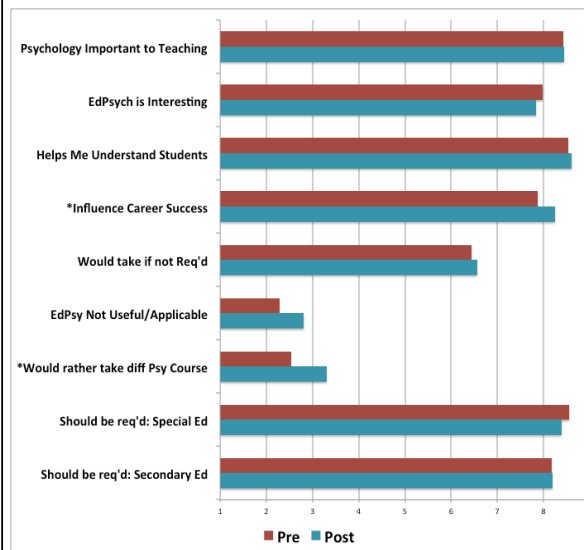


Figure 1. Mean scores for general attitude questions on a 9-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 9 = strongly agree) at the beginning and end of the semester.

Results

Specific EdPsych Topics

- Most of the 49 specific topics were rated above the midpoint of a 9-point scale
- Many items were rated highly important to begin with, and remained so at the end of the course
- Other items were rated as more important at the end of the semester (Fig 2)

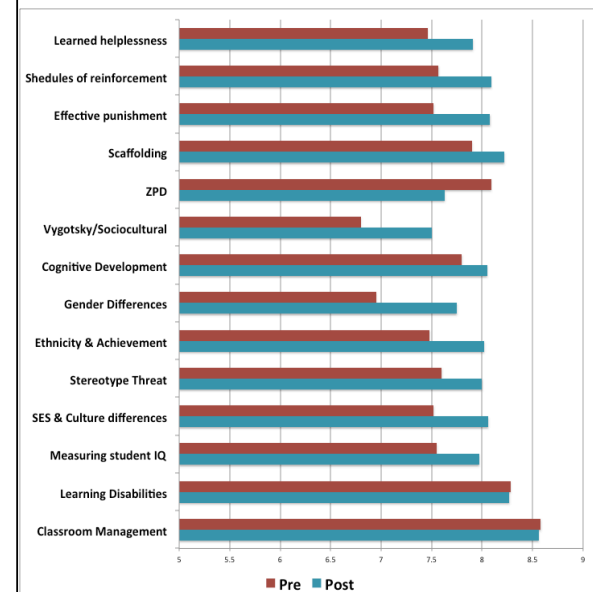


Figure 2. Mean ratings for the importance of a sample of specific Educational Psychology topics on a 9-point scale (1 = not important, 9 = very important) at the beginning and end of the semester.

Discussion

- Although only a few topics were rated as significantly more important at the end of the semester, these were particularly relevant topics such as diversity, ethnicity, culture, SES and specific classroom management concepts