PSYC 3205 Cognition, Language & Thought

Unit of Study Code: PSYC3205
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Format of Unit:
2 x 1 hour lectures/week x 13 weeks
1 x 2 hour tutorial/fortnight x 6 weeks
Tutorial sizes: maximum of 20 students per group

Credit Point Value: 4 Credit Points

Qualifying: 8 credit points of Intermediate Psychology including PSYC 2112 and PSYC 2113

Assessment:
Classwork: Written assignment, 1,500 words essay (25% of the total mark)
Due Date: Friday 13 May (week 9)

Class quiz (15% of the total mark)
Multiple-choice/short answer questions
Week 12: Thursday 2 June

Practical class attendance and participation (10% of the total mark)

Final Examination:
Multiple choice/short-answer questions
(50% of the total mark)

Evaluation of teaching and learning:
Date: Week 12
Type: Questionnaire

Unit of study general description:
This course will expand upon the theories of memory and attention discussed in PSYC2113 to consider a number of domains of higher cognitive processing. The first section of the course will focus on language processing and discuss theory and research about the processes involved in the acquisition of language, reading ability and theory of mind, as well as adult abilities in speech perception and language production. We will consider evidence obtained from healthy children and adults as well as from populations with developmental disorders such as specific reading disability and autism and populations with acquired disorders of language. The second section of the course will discuss theories and evidence relevant to understanding the determinants of skill and expertise in a variety of cognitive domains. Within each domain, we will use selected “case examples” that illustrate the application of the cognitive principles under consideration. Two hour practical classes held every second week will provide students with the opportunity to directly experience a range of cognitive methodologies; to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches; to consider the issues involved in designing and interpreting cognitive psychological research; and to discuss the applications of cognitive theories and methods to a variety of real world domains.
Teaching outcomes:

(1) Understanding of the major historical and conceptual issues that have influenced theories and approaches to investigating language, theory of mind, and skilled behaviour.

(2) Knowledge of the major theories and critical research evidence about the cognitive processes involved in language processing, theory of mind and skilled behaviour.

(3) Experience with and critical evaluation of some of the major methods used to investigate language, theory of mind and skilled behaviour.

(4) Capacity to critically evaluate theories about cognitive processes and the evidence offered to support them.

(5) Ability to appropriately interpret outcomes of empirical research on cognitive processes.

Evidence of learning:

Assessment will include a written assignment reporting on an experiment conducted in practical classes; a class quiz on methods and issues covered in the practical course; and completion of short tasks or activities in preparation for practical classes. At the end of semester, a multiple-choice and short-answer examination will assess knowledge of the entire course focusing particularly on lecture material and recommended readings.

SYLLABUS

Psycholinguistics
Introduction: Linguistics vs psycholinguistics; Units and levels of language

Language acquisition: nativist and non-nativist theories of language acquisition; methods of investigating infant behaviour; stages of language development; preverbal speech perception; acquisition of lexical/semantic and grammatical knowledge.

Case study: Autism – implications for understanding success and failure in language acquisition.

Speech perception and reading: issues in speech perception; theories of lexical organization and retrieval; word recognition and reading.

Case study: Dyslexia – implications for understanding success and failure in learning to read.

Language comprehension and production: syntax and morphology; processing of sentences, text and discourse; theories of word production and speech processing.

Case study: Aphasia: implications for understanding normal and impaired language processing.

Skilled behaviour and expertise
Cognitive determinants of skilled behaviour: attention, automaticity and control; declarative and procedural memory; stages of skill acquisition; implicit learning.

Expertise: expert/novice comparisons; the role of schema and working memory in expertise; talent vs practice as the basis of expertise; intelligence vs expertise.

Case study: “idiot savants” – implications for understanding intelligence.

Creativity and discovery: theories of creativity; the role of mental models, analogy and hypothesis testing in discovery processes.
TIMETABLE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>LECTURES</th>
<th>TUTORIALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to psycholinguistics; theories of language acquisition and (KC)</td>
<td>No tutorials</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methods of investigating infant behaviour; stages of language development; preverbal speech perception (KC)</td>
<td>Language acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Acquisition of semantic and grammatical knowledge (KC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Speech perception; spoken word recognition; language comprehension (KC)</td>
<td>Assessing language skills</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Spoken word production; aphasia (KC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Theory of mind; autism (SA)</td>
<td>Word recognition and reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Word recognition and reading (SA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Research on teaching reading; specific reading disability (SA)</td>
<td>Attention and skill</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Cognitive determinants of skilled behaviour (CO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Theories of skill acquisition and expertise (CO)</td>
<td>Talent vs practice: the determinants of expertise</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Expert/novice comparisons; Expertise and intelligence (CO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Creativity and discovery (CO) CLASS QUIZ in THURSDAY LECTURE</td>
<td>Applied cognitive psychology: class presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Creativity and discovery (CO)</td>
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KC=Karen Croot; SA=Sally Andrews; CO=Caleb Owens

REFERENCES

Textbook

Reference books


Other references will be made available electronically through the Library Course Readings Service.